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NO.46 NOVEMBER 1987

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MANAGING EDITOR Barnaby Page
STAFF WRITERS Richard Eddy, Dominic Handy, Lloyd Mangram, Ian Phillipson
PHOTOGRAPHERS Cameron Pound, Michael Parkinson
OFFICE Frances Mable

TECHNICAL WRITERS Simon N Goodwin, Jon Bates
ADVENTURE WRITER Derek Brewster
PBM WRITER Brendon Kavanagh
STRATEGY WRITER Philippa Irving
EDUCATION WRITER Rosetta McLeod
CONTRIBUTORS Robin Candy, Mike Dunn, Paul Evans, Dominic Handy, Nick Roberts, Ben Stone, Paul Sumner

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Roger Kean

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER David Western
ART DIRECTOR Gordon Druce
ILLUSTRATOR Oliver Frey
DESIGN Markie Kendrick, Wayne Allen
PROCESS AND PLANNING Jonathan Rignall (SUPERVISOR), Matthew Uffindell, Nick Orchard

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER Roger Bennett
ADVERTISEMENT EXECUTIVE Andrew Smales

SUBSCRIPTIONS Denise Roberts
MAIL ORDER Carol Kinsey

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ ☎ (0584) 5851
Please address correspondence to the appropriate person!

MAIL ORDER AND SUBSCRIPTIONS
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COVER BY Oliver Frey
3-D ARTWORK BY Markie Kendrick

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE 46 NOVEMBER 1987

FEATURES

11 NEWS FROM THE PCW SHOW

The full story on the year's biggest week—the hardware, the history, an Electronic Arts interview, a roundup of the season's promised games and more

53 THE 3-D STORY

Kicking off a 16-page 3-D section: games and graphics in the third dimension, plus Freespace details

71 THE CRASH HISTORY

Lloyd Mangram takes the CRASH story into 1985 with 12 Oli Frey covers

114 GRAPHICS AND SOUND SPECIALISTS

Interviews with the men behind the sprites and sound

142 THE CRASH CHALLENGE

Mike Dunn loses Zynaps

150 FANZINE FILE

The best of the Spectrum rags—and a few of the others, too

REGULARS

7 EDITORIAL

What's happening with the +3?

35 LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

CRASH hates fanzines, says a reader. Oh no it doesn't, says Lloyd.

42 NICK ROBERTS'S PLAYING TIPS

Exolon, Panzadrome and Mutants mapped—plus lots of POKEs POKEd

58 CRASH READERS' CHARTS—IN 3-D

61 BRENDON KAVANAGH'S PBM MAILBOX—IN 3-D

New games and a special *Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* comp—win a castle with Jade Games!

67 PHILIPPA IRVING'S FRONTLINE

Philippa enters the Arena—plus Briefing tips

97 TECH NICHE

Simon N Goodwin with Tech Tips, tape tweaks and all the electrickery, plus Jon Bates on Music Machine software

100 CRASH COMMS

Paul Evans continues his column with the secrets of the VTX5000 modem

103 BREWSTER'S ADVENTURE TRAIL—IN 3-D

Nothing stumps Derek in a full month of reviews, tips and letters

145 COMPETITION WINNERS

146 THE CLASSIFIEDS

152 ON THE SCREEN

Those screen dumps in full

156 PREVIEWS

Rampage, Star Wars and Nightmare—licences to thrill

160 ET AL

Those vids in part and the Sentinel chess set

DO IT YOURSELF

50 GAME SET AND MATCH

Win a video recorder and Ocean's sports sims

129 THE KING GRUB COMP

A rather distasteful little chance to win your own greasy, stinking original King Grub artwork

154 WIN AN APE ON THE RAMPAGE

Activision's game and horrifying monster suits are up for... uh... GRABS!

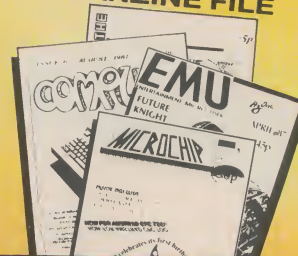
THE 3-D STORY



THE CRASH HISTORY



FANZINE FILE



'Allo, 'allo, what's all this, then? Another issue of this 'ere CRASH magazine coming out next month? Entering innocent newsgagents all over the country on November 26... adding full-colour pages without due care and attention... I'd better 'ave a look at that. Well, move along there please, haven't you got newsgagents to go to?

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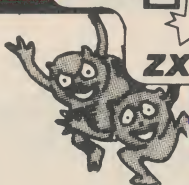
**The name
of the game**





CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM



By Bym

THE NEW MACHINE

'FOLLOWING the recent development of the Spectrum +3 computer US Gold are continuing their reputation as market leaders by fully supporting the machine with an impressive release schedule, 'blah, blah, blah.

It's the usual overenthusiasm of press announcements; but it landed on my desk (literally – thanks, Richard) on the day this CRASH went to the printers (literally), and it's further evidence that the +3 is gaining more and more credibility, supported by more and more releases.

When the +3 was announced this summer, retailers and software houses alike played the game of wait-and-see: wait and see if it sells before you produce games for it, wait and see if the high £249 price comes down before you put it on the high-street shelves.

Now the price has dropped to £199 – Amstrad boss Alan Sugar admits he'd planned it all along – where it's not competing against the Atari ST and Amiga (not to mention the cost of living). And the software houses are producing games for the +3: there's even Martech's insipidly-titled *Four Top Games* compilation, which effectively offers the new *2000 AD* licence *Slaine* at £3.75, rather less

than its advertised cassette price of £8.99.

There's significant support from utilities and hardware manufacturers, too; in this month's PCW Show report Simon N Goodwin writes of +3 compilers and assemblers, and Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 adds a new dimension to the new machine – with it you can put cassette software onto disk.

In August, CRASH wrote 'the +3 is given only an outside chance'. But is the new Spectrum coming in from the cold this winter?

HEALTHY AND WISE



There's constant grumbling from stick-in-the-mud readers about the changing CRASH staff, so presumably no gnus is good news; and to satisfy the CRASH old-timers here's a returning writer from the magazine's early days, **Bym Welthy**. Bym, another ultracool Ludlow College type, first contributed comments to CRASH



in Issue Three and reappeared on the doorstep as Issue 46 began.

KEEP YOUR GLASSES

NOW you're in the new dimension, stay there – keep your CRASH 3-D glasses in a safe place (eg under the mattress, or in Franco Frey's safety deposit box). The 3-D technique was so effective we're hoping to use it in another issue soon, so keep your eyes peeled.

IF YOUR SAMPLER WON'T LOAD . . .

You are not alone. In any large run of cassette duplication there are

bound to be some duds, and some of the 130,000-odd Issue 45 CRASH samplers have come back. (Most just wouldn't load; but one, returned to us at the PCW Show Newsfield stand, was a C0 – a cassette casing with no tape in it, just a leader!).

If your sampler will not load, for whatever reason, just send it with your name and address to:

CRASH SAMPLER REPLACEMENT SERVICE, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME

Technical reasons are wonderful scapegoats to blame things on, but we only have my memory to

blame for an error in the Ocean *Game Set And Match* comp on page 50. The text says we've drawn a line through the word OCEAN in the word square as an example, and we haven't. Quite simple, really. Honesty is the best

policy.

Well, probably everybody knows how to do word squares – but, for fairness's sake, you won't have to find the word OCEAN to win!

BARNABY PAGE

IN NEXT MONTH'S CRASH THE SSSUPPLEMENT ISSSSS 2000 AD

Don't judge a judge by his cover – in next month's CRASH you can get a real feel for Piranha's new *Judge Death* game with a special 16-page supplement featuring a Judge story from *2000 AD*. There'll also be a piece on the recent rush of *2000 AD* licences, including interviews with the programmers – and an inside look at Titan Books, the London fantasy/SF publisher which is releasing *2000 AD*'s Judge stories in book form and cosponsoring this supplement with Piranha.

TIE-INS PART ONE

From Mr Men to Masters Of The Universe: Robin Candy begins a two-part review of every tie-in and licence ever seen on the Spectrum

PLUS . . .

THE CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN – only 152 shopping pages to Christmas . . . as the games flood in, we present the CRASH guide to computing Christmas presents, including Ben Stone's Good Joystick Guide.

RUN IT AGAIN – those vehicle sims in full SOFTWARE CLUBS – beat 'em or join 'em?

COPYCATS – miles of tape and piles of disks sit waiting to be games. CRASH sees how the duplication's done.

FANCY PACKAGING – something has to protect those tapes and disks from hail and sticky fingers. Who writes the inlays? Who designs the cover? Have they even seen the game?

PLUS: expanded Playing Tips, more news, more reviews, comps and previews in December's CRASH, on sale Thursday November 26.

REVIEWS

The CRASH guide to November's highlights

SMASHED!

22 THUNDERCATS

Elite fights off all competition with its latest cartoon tie-in

HOT SHOTS 75% and over . . .

28 PROFESSIONAL SKI SIMULATOR

Take a budget skiing holiday courtesy of Code Masters

124 JACK THE NIPPER II IN COCONUT CAPERS

Gremlin's terrorising tot returns for some jungle antics

134 DIZZY

The latest egg-normous arcade adventure

FULL INDEX

29 <i>Action Force</i> Virgin Games	27 <i>Mystery Of The Nile</i> Firebird Silver
28 <i>Angleball</i> M.A.D.	24 <i>Outcast</i> CRL
67 <i>Arena</i> Bug Byte	116 <i>Park Patrol</i> Firebird Silver
130 <i>ATV Simulator</i> Code Masters	28 <i>Professional Ski Simulator</i> Code Masters
30 <i>Ballbreaker</i> CRL	104 <i>The Prospector</i> Tartan
124 <i>Call Me Psycho</i> Pirate Software	122 <i>Red L.E.D.</i> Reaktor
138 <i>Centurions</i> Ariolasoft	133 <i>Smash Out!</i> Pirate Software
104 <i>The Crown Of Ramhotep</i> Tartan	130 <i>Supernova</i> Players
134 <i>Dizzy</i> Code Masters	137 <i>Super Sprint</i> Activision
140 <i>The Fast And The Furious</i> GO!	22 <i>Thundercats</i> Elite
103 <i>Future Tense</i> Mystic Software	140 <i>Thunderceptor</i> GO!
132 <i>Holiday In Sumaria</i> Pirate Software	116 <i>Trantor</i> US Gold
131 <i>Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom</i> US Gold	139 <i>War Cars</i> Firebird Silver
124 <i>Jack The Nipper II In Coconut Capers</i> Gremlin Graphics	123 <i>White Heat</i> Code Masters
105 <i>Karyssia</i> Incentive	23 <i>XOR</i> Logotron
	137 <i>Yes Prime Minister</i> Mosaic Publishing

ADVERTISERS INDEX

Activision 9, 30-31, 132-133, 138-139, 141	Mirrorsoft 19
Amstrad 4-5	Mosaic 13
Argus Press Software 119	NSPCC 144
Ariolasoft 26, 128	Ocean 110, 153, back cover
CRASH Mail Order 148	Plastech Moulds 147
CRASH products 112-113	Prism 34, 149
E&J 36	Romantic Robot 96
Electronic Arts 48-49	Rossware 39
Electronic Services 40	Software Projects 101
Elite Systems 2, 25	Software Publishing Associates 66
Gremlin Graphics 32-33, 64-65	Spectravideo 38
Hewson 15	Tynesoft 52, 136
Imagine 6, 95, 159	US Gold 10, 20-21, 102, 121, 126-127, 135, 163
Incentive Software 35, 37, 155	Verran 120
KJC Games 60	Video Vault 66, 111
Lerm 36	Virgin Games 70
MicroProse 11, 41	

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KERRASH!

N·E·W·S·I·



THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS

... at least, that was the software industry's verdict on the tenth *Personal Computer World Show*, which was held September 23-27 at the Olympia exhibition hall in west London.

Despite early fears of a lacklustre weekend, record-breaking attendances reassured the industry, and soon after this *PCW Show* the publishing giant EMAP abandoned plans for a



► These aren't the show's security guards, but two Photon Megawarriors. They were based at the Newsfield stand, promoting CRASH's latest sister THE GAMES MACHINE – as well as LJN Toys's Photon Warrior kit.

rival exhibition. Preparations are already under way for next year's *PCW Show*, where it is expected games will be more heavily emphasised than ever before.

An eight-person CRASH team brings you this full report on the tenth *PCW Show*, and BEN STONE starts it off with a roundup of software launched or promised at the exhibition.

THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY has once again done its thing. All the hard work that's been going on in darkened programming pits and PR agencies across the country has come to fruition ('well, we've got some screen shots and a video on the stand but we're expecting a preview/running demo/review/production copy on Friday at 5.30, so we'll let you see it then' – nervous laugh).

The lights have been switched off; the stands – some homely, some impressive and some imposing – have been demolished; the business people have gone back to the office to talk marketing. MDs congratulate themselves; public-relations people sit back, satisfied with a job well done; the programmers reshuffle, take a day's break (to regain feeling in their numbed fingers) and then make a start on the next game; and the freelance journalists, always the last to leave anything, leg it off to the *Foot And Mouth* with the PR minions to become newtlike without spending any money.

More than 75,000 people attended, according to management estimates – more than ever before, and 9,000 more than last year.

But while the software industry puffs on its après-*PCW Show* cigarette, I'm trying to remember everything that happened. Why remember? Well, I had my notebook nicked ...

TELECOMSOFT SIGNS GRAFTGOLD

One of the most notable occurrences of the show was the signing of a contract between **Telecomsoft** (which

owns **Rainbird** and **Firebird**) and the programming team **Graftgold**. The men behind Graftgold are Steve Turner (programmer of the Seiddab trilogy, *Avalon* and *Quazatron*) and Andrew Braybrook (programmer of *Uridium* and *Paradroid* on the C64). These two will be joined by Dominic Robinson (Spectrum *Uridium*) and John Cumming, both from Hewson.

It won't be long before we're a major force in software development.

But probably the most exciting news from Telecomsoft for Spectrum-owners is the arrival of *Dark Sceptre*, which was first previewed in 1986. Programmer Mike Singleton was walking around the show with a finished Spectrum version in his pocket, according to rumour.

Also announced at the show was the

arrival of *Carrier Command* from Rainbird. This game puts you in command of an aircraft carrier, its fighters and weaponry. Realtime Software, the authors, use their filled-in-vector-graphics technique.

Among the coin-ops on the Telecomsoft stand was *Flying Shark*. Another Christmas release is Firebird's *Enlightenment* (being a CRASH reader you're already enlightened of course!), the sequel to that label's *Druid*. *Druid*, incidentally, was so popular that it's now been converted to the Japanese Nintendo system.

OCEAN

Ocean had a huge stand littered with arcade machines and TV monitors –

and surprisingly few game demos. One of the few was *Combat School*: this conversion incorporates a nice control method to get around the trackball problem.

Videos on the stand constantly ran promos for *Madballs* (a toy licence), *Platoon* (a film licence), *Where Time Stood Still* (resembling *The Great Escape*) and *Flash Point* (a fast strategy game).

The Imagine side of the stand had promos for *Gryzor*, *Rastan* and *Victory Road* (all arcade licences), and *Freddy Hardest* and *Navy Moves* from Dinamic, the people who did *Army Moves*.

ACTIVISION

Activision, System Three, Electric

► 72,000 and climbing: the tenth *PCW Show* attracted bigger crowds than ever before



PHOTO: Cameron Pound

N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T.....

Dreams and Infocom had some 31 new games between them. Spectrum releases included *Bangkok Knights*, *International Karate Plus* and *The Last Ninja*: all from **System Three** and all distinctly Oriental.

Electric Dreams has several arcade licences in the pipeline: these include *Championship Sprint* (a similar idea to *The Deeper Dungeons*, the *Gauntlet* add-on, with a track designer), *Super Hang-On* (a motorbike-racing game), *Firetrap* (Crazy Climber with flames!) and *Karnov* (a *Ghosts 'N' Goblins* variant).

Activision itself is releasing *Rampage* and *Knightmare* (see previews – page 156), *Predator* (Arnold Schwarzenegger's new movie) and *Galactic Games* (the invertebrate Olympics??).

US GOLD

US Gold, always a biggie, had *OutRun*, *720°* and *Gauntlet II* arcade games on show. Its fairly imminent Spectrum releases include *Charlie Chaplin* (which gives you the chance to become a silent-movie director), *Rygar*, and those three coin-op conversions.

The American house **Epix**, marketed in Britain by US Gold, has the Spectrum version of *California Games* skateboarding ultracoolly over the horizon.

GO!, US Gold's latest label, has four major releases due out before December: *Wizard Warz* (a role-playing game), *Captain America* and *Bravestarr* (two cartoon tie-ins) and *Lazer Tag*, now the best-selling toy in the US.

And GO! has the rights to three Capcom arcade machines: *Side Arms* (reviewed in CRASH Issue 39; a shoot-'em-up in the vein of *Salamander*), *Speed Rumbler* (another shoot-'em-up), and *Bionic Commando* (yet another shoot-'em-up, but with a touch of the six-million-dollar man thrown in for good measure).

CRL

CRL, now distributed in the UK by Electronic Arts (see feature pages 16-17), has *Jack The Ripper* – by a strange coincidence the Ripper murders are a century old this year. Also coming from CRL are *Oink!*, the computer game based on IPC's cult comic (and heralded by a special comic in CRASH

Issue 42), *Lords Of Midnight*, *Traction*, *Plasmatron*, *I-Alien*, *Vengeance*, *Jet Boy*, *Mandroid*, *Thunder Cross*, *Lifeforce* and *Discovery*.

Endurance Games has the licence of the board game *Eye*, described by Lee Rodwell in *The Times* as 'more challenging and complex than chess'; and **Addictive** released – wait for it – *Football Manager 2*.

MICROPROSAIC

One of the most impressive stands at the show belonged to **MicroProse**. The stand itself was remarkably well-designed and pretty too, but what stood out most was the queue for the rather splendid flight simulator promoting *Gunship*. This was overseen by a berompersuited 'Wild' Bill Stealey, President of the US-based company. And as for interesting Spectrum releases, *Gunship* looks like it's the only one in the MicroProse pipeline.

PAC-MAN HANGS AROUND WITH FAIRIES

Just when you thought you'd never see his stupid face on the Spectrum again, **Quicksilver** goes and digs him out of his grave – yes, Pac-Man's back. This time he isn't going around gobbling dots; in *Pac-Land*, he's helping a lost fairy get home to fairyland!

Argus Press Software previewed *The Hunt For Red October* at The PCW Show. It's a submarine game based around, er, well, the sea really.

Mirrorsoft announced the coming of *Andy Capp*, a veteran of Mirror Group newspaper comics, on computer;

Martech previewed the November release of *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix*. Martech also has *Slaine*, based on the 2000 AD character.

ARIOLASOFT VIRGIN

Ariolasoft's labels have them a fair number of Speccy games. *The Pink Panther* and *Tom And Jerry* are coming on the **Magic Bytes** label; both will appear on the Spectrum in early 1988. There's also *Clever And Smart*, a game about two private detectives.

The **Viz** label has *Werewolves Of*



► Not a licence more, not a licence less: Jeffrey Archer and R2-D2 on the Domark stand

London, which will be a hairy affair, and **Reaktör** (launched in midsummer with three Spectrum titles but rather quiet since) has a beat-'em-up in store: *Bushido Warrior*.

From **Virgin Games** comes *Action Force* by Gang Of Five: this promises to be similar to the same group's *Dan Dare*. The boardgames *Scrabble De Luxe* and *Scruples* (previewed this month) are also on the way.

The **Novagen** people were whispering about *Damocles* – *Mercenary II* and it looks like it'll be around sometime next spring – yippee!

PIRANHA DOMARK

Piranha was a year old at the show, and celebrated with a cosy, almost homely stand – real, goldfish-devouring piranhas notwithstanding – featuring more new games than most software houses. There were running demos of *Yogi Bear*, *Judge Death* and *Gunboat*, all of which will be out in November. *Roy Of The Rovers* is expected early in 1988, and *Through The Trap Door*

should be reviewed in the next CRASH.

Domark's stand was in a quiet and shady corner of Olympia, where Directors Do(minic Wheatley) and Mark (Strachan) lounged resplendent in blazers and straw boaters, the like of which has never before been seen at The PCW show. Spiffing, really.

Jeffrey Archer – the well-known one – graced the stand with his presence on Wednesday, the first day of the show, to promote the game of his book *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less*. R2-D2 was there too, and what a jovial chap he turned out to be: the little & !!! "squirited me with water. He was, of course, there to promote *Star Wars: The Computer Game*. Yes, at long last someone has licensed the coin-op.

Also launched or demonstrated on the Domark stand was a set of TV licences on the new label **TV Games**: *Krypton Factor*, a revamped version of *Blockbusters*, *Countdown*, *Bullseye* and *Treasure Hunt*. The **Streetwise** label previewed *Unitrax* (a shoot-'em-up) and *The Sewer*, a winner of CRASH's age-old Genesis: Birth Of A Game competition.

PHOTO: Cameron Pound



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► GEM gem: Kempston's trendy Desktop +3 package

SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE

Alan Sugar talks tough on the Spectrum as SIMON N GOODWIN makes a circuit of the show's hardware

CHEETAH had three new products for Spectrum-users at The PCWShow; the most interesting, from the gamer's point of view, was the 125 Special joystick. This looks deceptively similar to the old 125+ (which Cheetah claims is the UK's top-selling joystick), apart from the fact that it has two separate cables to connect it to the computer.

Joysticks have differed in their feel and robustness, but up till now the basic functions have stayed the same. On most joysticks you can move the stick in eight compass directions and press one or two fire buttons, but that's all. Games have had to be simplified to work with those controls, complicated to use them in combination, or kludged to use a mixture of joystick and keys that is hardly ever satisfactory.

The 125 Special changes all that. It gives you ten different controls. The extra cable from the Special must be plugged into a second joystick socket – as on the Spectrum +2 and +3 – to give the stick its extra control.

The Special has no less than FOUR fire buttons, each of which can control a different action – there could be one button for each of three weapons, say, and one to pick up or drop things. This gets around the biggest problem of playing games with a joystick: the need to reach for the keyboard whenever something unusual must be done.

You can also control things by twisting the stick, as well as by moving it in the usual way. For instance, you can send a commando running in one direction by pushing the stick, simultaneously turning the upper part of his body to fire in another direction. Likewise, you can control the turret and the base of a tank independently, and fly a simulator much more easily. In conjunction with the extra fire buttons, the twist grip makes the 125 Special far more responsive than a normal stick.

The 125 Special costs £12.99, and comes in two versions: one with scrambled connections for the Amstrad Spectrums, and one for use

with twin-port interfaces such as Interface 2. Single-port interfaces, and ones that use more than one standard (such as Kempston and Cursor), are unlikely to work with the 125 Special.

The new joystick has two extra switches to control automatic repeat firing, and works as a normal stick if you only plug in one lead. It uses 'rugged long life contacts' – not microswitches – but comes with a 12-month guarantee, which is encouraging.

In the long run Cheetah will only do well with this joystick if software producers can be persuaded to write games that take advantage of its unique features. There was nothing like that at The PCWShow, though a compatible game from Ocean was just 'not quite ready' (haven't we heard that before?!).

Cheetah boss Howard Jacobson says he's spoken to lots of software houses about the new stick and got an enthusiastic response. Time will tell.

THAT +3 PRICE IN FULL

Amstrad boss Alan Sugar came clean to *Computer Trade Weekly* at the show about his expectations for the new Spectrum, admitting that the +3 had always been intended to sell at £199 – it was reduced to that price from £249 on the first day of the show, as predicted here in July. He also said, encouragingly, that the +3 is not necessarily the last Spectrum.

With his usual bluntness, Sugar revealed that the £249 launch price was just intended to fleece enthusiasts who'd pay any money for a new Spectrum, and to make it easier for dealers to sell the machine at '£50 off' this winter. Come back Uncle Clive, all is forgiven!

The +3 disk drive has attracted lots of interest from utility programmers. Trojan, the light-pen people, have picked up the rights to Myrmidon's word processor *The Last Word* and

converted it to run on the +3 as well as on earlier Spectrums.

HiSoft was the first with an assembler for the +3, and has followed the £20 disk version of *DevPack* with much-improved compilers for Pascal, C and ZX BASIC on the +3. At long last HiSoft's Pascal and C compilers (£35 and £29 respectively) have been converted to handle disk files, both for programs and for data.

The new version of HiSoft BASIC, the fastest Spectrum BASIC compiler, goes one better than +3 BASIC because it supports OPEN and CLOSE for disk files. For some reason these commands weren't supported by the BASIC interpreter built into the new machine, but you can now use them in compiled programs of up to 40K, and compiled code will run on any version of the Spectrum. HiSoft BASIC costs £29.

THAT Z88 STAND FULL

Sir Clive Sinclair's Cambridge Computer stand, ironically next to the Amstrad stand in the main hall, was noticeably busier than the Amstrad/Sinclair area on the trade days. The first adventure game for the Z88 laptop was announced at the show, but there's not much prospect of shoot-'em-ups on its eight-line LCD display. (That adventure game is *Old Scores*, from a new company which hopes to call itself London Logic and also plans to develop more Z88 software. For information ring (01) 959 6239).

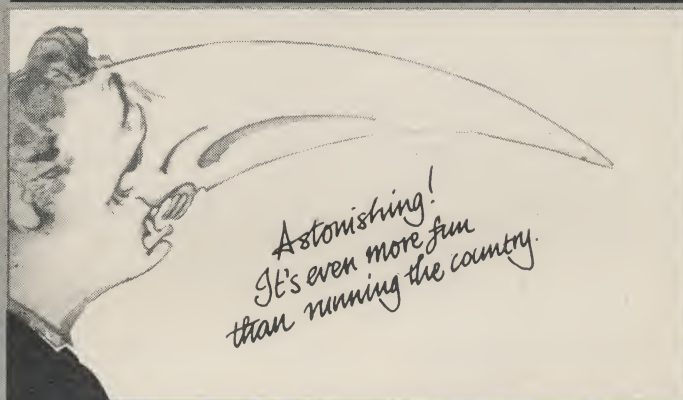


MICE ON THE DESK

Kempston made its name in the early days of the Spectrum, churning out cheap and cheerful joystick interfaces. Now Kempston has turned to mice – or rather mouse interfaces – that let you control programs like Rainbird's *OCF Art Studio* and The Edge's *The Artist 2* by rolling a little plastic box across the top of your desk.

At the show Kempston revealed the logical add-on to its mouse interface: a 'desktop' package for the Spectrum +3, similar in appearance to the GEM (graphics environmental manager) system for big Amstrads and Atari STs.

Kempston's *Desktop* lets you control the +3 by pointing at pictures on the screen, and includes all the usual features: file management, a calculator, digital clock, and a simple text-editor notebook, with options to cut and paste text from place to place. The +3 *Desktop* package costs £70 with the mouse, or £25 for the software alone.



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NEVER MIND THE BITS, FEEL THE QUALITY

Software's getting better all the time, says **CHRISTINA ERSKINE** (erstwhile Editor of *Popular Computing Weekly*) in this analysis of The PCW Show. But, she adds, Spectrum programmers must fight the 16-bit machines on their own ground.

A TENTH BIRTHDAY is something of a milestone and one expects that at the tenth PCW Show organisers were hoping for something special to mark that anniversary. My own impression – which has lasted since the show and through reading other press reports of it – is that they got it.

That's not in the sense that there were amazing new launches of incredible machines which took everyone by surprise, or even that, despite some palatial stands, the show looked awe-inspiring. It's simply that the overall quality of software appears to be on the up and up.

This impression is partly formed through comparison with last year's show. At the 1986 PCW Show, a number of the major software companies contented themselves with videos of the licence from which the game would eventually be written. Consequently, many visitors were left with no clear idea of what the finished products would look like.

This year, maybe because the

companies had simply got their acts together or maybe because the show took place two weeks later, there was much more emphasis on showing the games themselves.

Obviously, when you see a demo on video of forthcoming titles, without having a chance to actually play them, you don't get a full idea of how lasting a game's appeal is or whether the screens that aren't demoed are as challenging as those that are, and nor will you know about any small bugs that may crop up – but it's a damn sight better than not seeing the game at all.

Two things struck me especially about the software on display: the nature of licensing deals has changed, and the sprites (particularly character sprites, but really graphics overall) are getting bigger and better.

LICENCES TO THRILL

Licensing deals first. Two years ago, when licensing deals were starting to

make the news, some of the films (or whatever) destined for micro conversion were frankly inappropriate, and it showed in the finished games. *Back To The Future* (an Electric Dreams game), for example, may have been an enjoyable film, but is the story of time travel tied in with a plot of your future mother falling for you really easily adaptable to a computer-game format?

Now, however, the deals look much more carefully thought-out. For a start, companies are looking more closely at cartoon characters, and toys, whose nature is much more suited to computers and also to many of the people who will want to play them.

Thus we have Captain America, Lazer Tag and 720° from US Gold's new label GO! – licensed from Marvel Comics, Mattel toys and the coin-ops respectively. And, of course, US Gold itself also has *OutRun*, the Sega arcade game which everyone seems to be tipping for Number One this year.

COMPILATIONS CORNER THE MARKET

I believe that the Christmas Number One is more likely to be one of the staggering compilations we're promised. Compilations, too, appeared to have really grown up at this year's show; gone are the days when a compilation was a good way of selling off back catalogue and getting rid of dead stock. This year there are some mouthwatering goodies on offer.

Take *Solid Gold*, from that ubiquitous lot in Birmingham, for example. If you don't have *Ace Of Aces*, *Leaderboard*, *Infiltrator*, *Winter Games* and *Gauntlet* already, how could you resist that lot from US Gold at £9.95 on tape?

But the compilation to really go for this autumn must be Ocean's *Game Set*

And Match (covered in CRASH Issue 45). Ocean has evidently decided that no other company should ever feel it necessary to release a sports simulation again. *Game Set And Match* has no less than ten sports over a four-cassette package (also available as four +3 disks), including *Daley Thompson's Supertest*, *Hyper Sports*, *Jonah Barrington's Squash* and others just too numerous to mention.

Add to this Elite's 6-Pak Vol. 2 (see CRASH Issue 44) and *The Elite Collection*, and Ocean's *Magnificent Seven*, and you can see why the software houses are no longer thinking of compilations as an afterthought.

SPRITES MAKE RIGHT?

Then there are those sprites. Games like Rainbird's *Dick Special* on the 16-bit machines and *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper* from US Gold (reviewed this issue) feature large, colourful animated characters which are a far cry from the blobs and two-pixel heroes to which 8-bit-machine-owners had become resigned.

Finally, the number of companies putting their resources into Spectrum disk versions of new games is encouraging. OK, so it's not a particularly radical step to duplicate onto the Amstrad three-inch disks as well as onto cassette, but it all helps demand for the +3 itself, which in turn will keep the Spectrum alive and kicking as a current machine – and it always did need a standard disk drive anyway.

The quality of 8-bit software is improving after some months of stagnation and paradoxically this has something to do with the emergence of 16-bit micros (Amiga, Atari ST) and games consoles. For the consoles, notably the Sega games machine, there's some excellent arcade-style software, with some faithful coin-op conversions that mainstream software houses trying to produce arcade originals on the computer must find extremely frustrating.

Because it's so much easier to create good graphics on the Atari ST and Amiga than on the 8-bit machines, their games naturally look and sound better. 8-bit (Spectrum, Commodore, Amstrad) software will continue to be produced as long as the huge and steady user base remains. But if Spectrum software has tiny jerky graphics, feeble sound and weak story lines, who can blame users for upgrading – or moving sideways to a dedicated console – en masse? To keep their market, the software houses must provide quality, for now computer owners have a real choice.

So if you're planning to hang on to your Spectrum for a good while yet, you could do well on the software front. Despite the number of STs and Amigas demonstrating titles at the show, despite whiz-bang demos of Acorn's Archimedes, and despite the undeniable interest shown in the games machines, The PCW Show indicated to me that it's a bit early to announce the death of the 8-bit machines.

► The Sega Master System, outrunning all opponents: can Spectrum coin-ops be the same again?





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CALIFORNIA GAMES

Last month CRASH brought you Trip Hawkins's balls – the Nerf Balls, little sponges which Electronic Arts bureaucrats throw at each to relieve nervous tension after going into the rough in another golf simulation.

But there's more to EA than, well, little sponges. There's quality, aggression and a massive release schedule – some dozen Spectrum titles and more for 16-bit machines – behind the American giant's push into Britain, which starts this autumn.

There's also a new approach to selling (and creating) software which could make or break EA's European experiment.

And there's the wit, wisdom and statistics of boss Trip Hawkins, ever so faithfully reproduced in this exclusive interview with BARNABY PAGE.

ELECTRONIC ARTS – the very name suggests William M 'Trip' Hawkins, 33, founder, President and pundit. His expansive talk and his expanding corporation, which officially launched its European operation at The PCW Show, are shot through with an American approach to games software: the programmers are 'artists' (his word), the products are elaborate and finely-tuned coffee-table C64-oriented jobs, many of them sophisticated battle/vehicle/sports simulations or adventure/role-playing games (RPGs).

Hawkins is careful not to offend his European counterparts, now rivals, too much – The PCW Show, where he held forth over pastrami salad and Coke, was evidence enough of a flourishing industry here – but quietly he criticises a stale atmosphere in the software world. 'My initial impression of the show is that everyone seems to have coin-op licences and imitations of someone else's coin-op licences,' he observes. 'There needs to be more innovation.'

'We need to raise the standards rather than continuously having lower prices and the same rubbish.'

'But if you have a programming genius trying to be managing director, you're going to have problems.'

That's why EA's 220-strong team (almost 40 of them in the European headquarters in Langley, Berkshire) works like a film studio. Level-headed producers coordinate flighty artistic programmers, providing technical help and business management. There's no in-house drudgery, no programming production line.

'They're more motivated when they're independent,' he says, 'and we should try to be a company that helps

a programmer do the things he doesn't want to do.

'The kind of people that are good team players make good employees; that's very different from being an artist. An artist has to have the nerve to do something really crazy.'

GAMES GROWN-UPS PLAY

Crazy? EA's product shows little of the offbeat imagination that you can find in British games, from *Manic Miner* to *Head Over Heels*; instead it's polished, snazzy, high-tech.

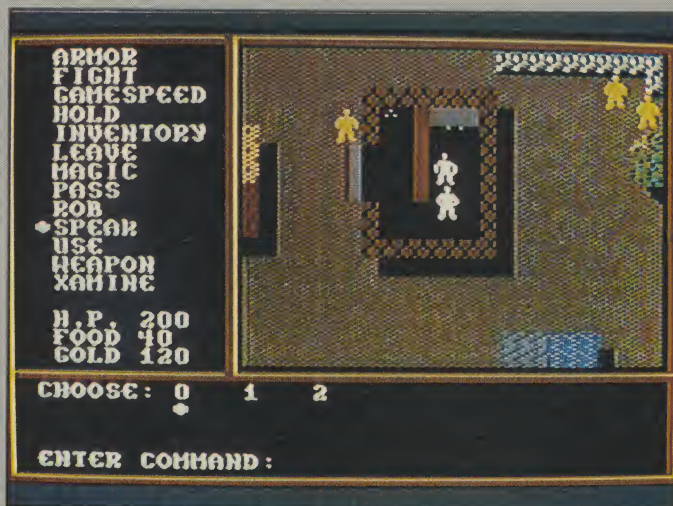
Apart from the CRL and Nexus games which it's distributing (they're 'affiliated labels'), EA itself will release four Spectrum titles this winter. They are *PHM Pegasus*, simulating a 'warship of the jet age... so agile... so deadly... so fast'; *Arctic Fox*, featuring a 'deadly tank of the near future... a three-dimensional battlefield... accurate simulation of tank movement'; and *Bard's Tale I*, a complex computer RPG.

But Spectrum conversions are a pain in the disk drive for Hawkins's multinational, because the market is almost entirely in the UK. Is it worth EA's while converting games for this anomaly of a machine? Yes, says Hawkins, promising some 12 Spectrum releases from EA and its two affiliated labels in the next few months, not least because EA is already supporting a Japanese NEC-type machine similar to the Speccy.

'It's unfortunate,' he concedes, 'that there are so many different models. Converting a game is like changing a



► Every home should have one: Electronic Arts's polished product includes *The Chessmaster 2000* (above; PC screenshot) and *Legacy Of The Ancients* (Commodore 64 screenshot)



Mercedes into a Rolls-Royce – you have to get out a hammer and start banging around. We really need to have a standardised computer. If every TV was different and they couldn't receive the same broadcasts it'd be untenable.'

Still, 'even with ambitious projects like *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* we're going to try to bring them to the cassette market. Anyone who's observant, if they see what's on Commodore cassette that's a good idea of what'll be coming on Spectrum.'

A TRIP TO THE MOON ON GOSSAMER WINGS

So POSSIBLE EA Spectrum titles include *Apollo 18: Mission To The Moon*, *The Chessmaster 2000* (superchess), *Skate Or Die*, *Lords Of Conquest* (superRisk), *Test Drive* and

Train Escape ('more than just the greatest fast action arcade fun', apparently) as well as some more soothing sports sims, *Mini-Putt* and *World Tour Golf*.

It all sounds rather cool, calm, professional; not 'crazy' at all; grown-up, in fact.

Trip Hawkins has an answer. The average American games-buyer is 27, he says. (As a point of reference, the average CRASHtionnaire respondent is just over 16.)

And he says computer games have to compete with mainstream entertainment: films, TV, recorded music. The software industry has to be more than a quirky backwater.

'The subject matter of software must be more suitable for adults. I don't think adults are so interested in blasting away aliens...'

'If you look at movies, TV, books, it's about real life. It's about real people in human situations.'

THAT'S 100,000,000

There are about 50 million home computers in the world, Hawkins wildly estimates; but there are well over 100 million video machines. 'With much better, cheaper, realistic software you could get 100 million computers,' enthuses Hawkins.

'And half the world's women - we haven't made a lot of software they're interested in yet.'

He's pinning down the problems. For Trip Hawkins's new age to dawn, with a mouse in every pot and a joystick in every garage, leisure software must be CHEAPER, MORE REALISTIC and EASIER TO USE and, of course, there must be a STANDARD MACHINE. (You can imagine him at the blackboard.)

His objectives are consistent. IBM PC-compatibles are the single best-selling family in the USA, and one analysis (by Wharton Information Systems) expects almost 400,000 to be sold in the UK in 1987. Hawkins expects a boom in cheap PC-compatibles; there's your standard machine.

In the USA, 16-bit machines already account for half of micro sales. And 'as computers become more powerful they will become easier to use because they're more realistic. The digital sound on an Amiga is about FM-broadcast quality.' There's your realism and user-friendliness.

But digital sound occupies so many megabytes of memory that Hawkins's superrealistic machines will have to use CD-I, the 'compact disc-interactive' technology announced in March 1986 which will allow home micros to read CD data. A CD can store far more information far more accurately than a cassette or floppy disk.

EA has been licensed by CD-I developers Philips and Sony to use the new technology; EA is building a CD-I emulator; Hawkins expects a hardware prototype in early 1988 and, with luck, a machine on the market by Christmas 1988, when it will possibly coincide with digital audio tape (DAT) supplanting CDs on the cutting edge of sound recording. We live in an age of progress.

FLOWING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

In Hawkins's ideal world, CD-I and other new technologies could be 'brought back to the mainstream computers which sell better'. And, of course, CD-I would integrate a conventional CD player with a micro; one step on the computer's way to the centre of home entertainment.

Perhaps that's the point, the integration as much as the technical development. 'You'd be buying more than just a computer,' says Hawkins. 'I don't have any problems with the word 'computer', but for some people it has a negative connotation.'

'There's still a lot of missionary work to be done - people who like computer games feel embarrassed about it. People think it's silly - I think they're silly.'

But the illusion of silliness, of computer games as just another phase

of adolescence, may be fading. A report published in July in *Time*, the influential American newsmagazine, said that nearly 40% of American executives polled 'used their office computers for entertainment'. (Admittedly, the poll results came from software house Epyx.)

And there is joy at Electronic Arts over every sceptic who's converted. Trip Hawkins in visionary mode: 'Playing is the best way to learn. Every other species of mammal, that's the only way they learn, they don't go sit in classrooms and read books.'

'So if you've got a flight simulator like PHM Pegasus you're getting a much better idea of what it's like to be in a situation like that - it's role-playing and so on, but it's dynamic and exciting.'

'The simple process of interaction is good for your mind, and whatever the subject matter of a game is it makes you think about it. I get involved in reading books from playing games.'

And 'it'll be really mainstream when a computer is a social thing like TV or hi-fi. People listen to music, go to movies together. Software can be very social, it can teach you a lot about people.' Hawkins's beloved 'average household' has the TV on seven hours a day - if only games could take some of that time...

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Hawkins draws fine lines between educational software - the stuff of CRASH Course - EA's self-improvement software, and empty entertainment. 'We don't go out of our way and say we're going to teach people something as a course,' he explains, 'though there are a lot of companies in the USA which do that, they call it curriculum software. (EA itself produces software for schools and colleges.) A lot of educators are snobs about computers and software, they're pedantic.'

'Almost every new medium was introduced through a young generation - in the Fifties TV was a family purchase

so kids could watch it, and then in the Sixties when rock and roll came along it was for the kids.'

He doesn't exonerate all games from the charge of silliness, though. 'Shoot-em-ups are good for relaxation, but if that's all you did it would become a negative thing - if all you're doing is shooting things, killing things and blowing things up.'

SHOOTING THINGS, KILLING THINGS AND BLOWING THINGS UP

Hawkins founded EA in 1982 with just two million dollars (about £1.2 million at current rates); it was, publicity says, 'the 136th entrant into the home computing field' (whatever that field comprises). Its first software was shipped in May 1983. (An early investor was former Apple Computers boss Steve Wozniak; Hawkins had worked at Apple for four years. EA was - still is - based in San Mateo, near San Francisco in northern California, near Silicon Valley; Hawkins was born in San Diego on the Mexican border, in the showbiz south of the state. Thus he applies technology to entertainment.)

EA wasn't ready then to go multinational. For two years, 1984-1986, its product was distributed here by Ariolasoft.

But the company has grown apace. After making a pretax profit of five million dollars (£3 million) on 30 million dollars (£18.4 million) revenue in 1986, EA expects to pull in 50 million dollars' (£30.7 million) worth of sales this year. And late last year Hawkins reckoned it was time to cross the Atlantic and see if what works there works here.

His utopia is unlikely to be realised without bitter fighting in battlefield Europe. Hawkins is directly challenging Activision (already an archrival Stateside, where EA dominates the sales charts; now a growing force here after its recent return from four years in the red and the success of *Enduro Racer* and *The Last Ninja*), Ocean, Elite and Mirrorsoft. EA is not entering the budget market, because Hawkins believes quality commands its price.

► Show business indeed: Electronic Arts boss Trip Hawkins puts the Hollywood into computer games



OFF CENTRESOFT

One vital outlet, Boots, has already been lost. Since the controversial collapse of Creative Sparks Distribution (CSD) in July, Boots has been supplied entirely by Centresoft - and Hawkins doesn't want EA/CRL/Nexus product going through Centresoft. He has two reasons.

First, Centresoft would ship games manufactured for the UK to continental Europe - but Hawkins wants to handle each country separately, with different prices and translated packaging. (He has already signed deals with distributors in seven other European countries, though the quite important Italian market hasn't been touched despite its American-style Commodore 64 emphasis.)

'It's not that we don't like Centresoft,' he explains, 'we want English-language product in the country where it belongs.'

Second, Hawkins wants EA to deal directly with retailers, an unprecedented move cutting out the distributors entirely. (The only distributor handling EA product is Terry Blood Distribution, which will put its games on the shelves in John Menzies and WH Smith.)

Indeed, that's one of the reasons EA signed up its affiliated labels CRL and Nexus; they can 'concentrate on product and make more product and better product' without worrying about distribution, and EA will have enough different titles to impress the retailers.

'Now the interest in signing on other labels has diminished,' says Hawkins. What we really wanted was a critical mass so we could go to retailers with an attractive range.'

Why? 'We don't do this direct sale thing because it's the be all and end all, we do it because it has to be done.'

Why? Well, by talking to the retailers themselves, EA can cultivate loyalty to its labels, ensuring better point-of-sale marketing (ie advertising in the shop itself) and more orders.

ANOTHER PHILOSOPHY

And you guessed it - there's also a philosophy. Hawkins wants to see bigger, better software shops like bookshops, divorced from the quite different hardware market. 'In the early days of hi-fi records and record players sold together, now they're separate and it'd be ridiculous to buy them in the same place. I'd like to see more stores really committed to software and stocking a broad range.'

It's an integrated view: of how games software is programmed, debugged, fine-tuned, packaged, distributed, advertised, sold, played, regarded. If EA succeeds in the UK, it will change the way we think about games (this high-tech hyperbole is getting to me). As the EA poster says, *Unleash the power of your imagination...*

N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T·

To round off this **PCW Show** report, here are two very different perspectives on the five days at Olympia: from former **CRASH** Editor **ROGER KEAN**, and from reader **ANTHONY BAILEY**, a homegrown-software programmer who hit the big time there . . .



AND THE SHOW SAILS ON

I FIRST visited The *Personal Computer World Show* in 1983, just as we were setting up **CRASH**. It was held at the Barbican Centre near the City Of London – a rather nicer venue than ancient Olympia, but not big enough for the burgeoning show, which had already been going for five years. The reason for growth was obvious enough: the sixth *PCW Show* had a healthy helping of games software houses exhibiting for the first time.

Wandering around, one couldn't help overhearing the displeasure of the business-computing community as seriously-besotted pinstripes grumbled about the noise emanating from the entertainment exhibitors so unwisely scattered willy-nilly among their sober stands.

The move to Olympia in 1984 gave the organisers far more room, and the layout of the National Hall and Olympia 2 meant the noisy exuberance of the 'leisure side', as it was becoming known, could be contained in just one side of the vast hall. Since then, with

each year, 'PCW' (as it's called) has got larger, the number of visitors greater and the enthusiasm of the trade higher. This year the tenth *PCW* enjoyed a 38% increase in the number of exhibitors and had the busiest Saturday and Sunday in its history.

As with any undertaking of this complexity, there are always moans. Olympia isn't the easiest exhibition hall to erect stands in, with its several floors, lack of lifts and appalling facilities.

Also, this year I quickly detected the dissatisfaction of games software houses who felt the organisers were not exposing the leisure industry to the noncomputer press as effectively as they were publicising the business side. And it was this disaffection that East Midland Allied Press (EMAP), publisher of *Computer & Video Games*, *Commodore User* and *Sinclair User*, tapped into when it announced that next year its exhibition arm would organise a games-only show in competition with *PCW*.

It caused what was probably the

biggest buzz of the show, and forced everyone taking part to think deeply about *PCW* and what it represents. But uncertainty about EMAP's mid-August date and the venue, the Alexandra Palace, eventually weighed against the newspaper and magazine giant – soon after *PCW*, EMAP abandoned its plans.

And many of the bigger software houses had little faith that the enormous international goodwill built up over years of *PCWs* would be switched to another organiser, at another venue and in the height of the holiday season. For those attending *PCW*, the two trade days are the most vital. That's when the international business deals are done that enable British producers to spread their influence and sales, and thus allow them to continue developing expensive games which can be sold here in Britain at reasonable prices.

But while all this behind-the-scenes activity raged, the National Hall thronged with visitors, and judging by the reactions from those who caused traffic jams round the two Newsfield stands up on the first floor, the public's regard for the show is as high as it ever

was.

Perhaps there weren't many startlingly new games to see, but there was a lot of high-quality product about. 'Wild Bill' Stealey, American ace fighter pilot and MicroProse boss, drew huge crowds round his company's stand, as he offered *Gunship* flights in a real simulator machine – an indication perhaps, that next year's show would do well to offer more interactive fairground-type events.

For us at Newsfield, the sticker war that threatened on Saturday flared into open battle on Sunday as *Your Sinclair* attempted to cover everyone in sight, and **CRASH** personnel valiantly fought back by overstickling the slogans with **FRAGILE** and **SOLD** stickers. Thanks go to our deep-cover agents who went boldly to the very jaws of the *Your Sinclair* stand to neutralise bestickered visitors at the point of infection.

We've offered *Your Sinclair* an official intermagazine custard-pie fight next year. See you then . . .

ROGER KEAN

BRIGHTER THAN A SUPERNOVA

EARLY one chilly Saturday morn, when the sun had scarcely risen and the world was still in sleepy slumber (all right, it was eight o'clock, but I consider that pretty early for a Saturday) a trio of hardened, battle-weary Spectrum-owners, consisting of Andrew, David and myself, left the quiet suburbs of the city on a journey to its centre and to that den of iniquity, the infamous *PCW Show*.

Upon arriving at Earls Court tube station en route to Olympia, my suspicions that the show was going to be popular were confirmed; the platform was jam-packed, and when the train arrived everyone crammed into it in something akin to one of those silly record-breaking attempts that Noel Edmonds used to organise. It was a little uncomfortable, but constituted a great way to meet new people; 'excuse me but your elbow is in my ear' was an obvious method of introduction.

We all managed to creak and groan our way to Olympia, and once there most people began a frantic race to get a place in the queue. However, remembering having to stand in line for an hour last year, with only paper aeroplanes made from leaflets to amuse us, we had wisely bought tickets in advance and were able to walk straight in. Well, that is to say we would have walked straight in if the ticket-holders' entrance hadn't been obscured by the main queue that encircled the huge building; but at last we located it and, after taking a deep breath, we ventured in.

The first thing that happened was that we were viciously attacked and mugged by two *PCW Show* representatives who relieved Andrew of two pounds in return for a thoroughly useless show guide.

The 1986 show had been amazingly

BIG. This year's was stupefyingly **BIG**. Almost everything had grown in size: the crowds, the stands, the monitor screens, the prices of the hot dogs . . . The adverts were huge too, but the one hanging from the ceiling for US Gold's tritely-named new **GO!** label was so large it blended into the background – afterwards neither David nor Andrew could actually recall having read it!

The posters had swelled too, from little A3/A4 things to enormous monsters hitherto seen only in **CRASH** Christmas Specials. Unfortunately the free plastic bags hadn't grown to compensate, so most of the posters got rather crumpled and torn during the course of the hectic day.

David came up with the ingenious idea of tying several of the widely available helium-filled balloons to his plastic bags in order to lighten the load. However, the first hour of the show always degenerates into a deranged paper chase as everyone struggles to collect every available freebie poster and catalogue; I collected five tons of trivia and threw away everything except for my **CRASH** carrier bag and one price list when I returned home.

The upshot of all this was that the balloons proved incapable of carrying such a load, and so we decided to tie them all together and ended up with ten balloons on a string as many metres long, which I then carted around for the rest of the day, weaving it in and out of signposts and the like. This was of course very silly (though not quite as silly as the people breathing helium from the balloons and then talking in squeaky voices) (such as *Richard Eddy* on the **CRASH** stand - *Man Ed*), but the balloons made a good mascot and everyone looked up in the air as they walked past.

The sight of ten colourful balloons

proved to be a useful reference point when we got split up later in the day (especially when we were almost crushed to death in a crowd from which real screams were emanating – I kid you not).

Balloons in tow, we pushed and shoved our way around the hall. I don't intend to describe everything there, but there were a couple of things that caught my eye: the enormous Ocean and Imagine stands were filled to overflowing with arcade machines, promotional videos, and demos . . . not many games on home computers, though. I suppose Ocean knows that the arcade conversions are rather lacking when compared to their originals, and would prefer not to disappoint the ever-hopeful home-computer-owner.

Beyond said *Star Trek* was almost ready, which was great news, except they'd said that the year before . . . the Mastertronic stand was so full of other companies' products that I only worked out it was really the Mastertronic stand when I looked in the show guide . . . there were Z88s, Amstrads, and Atari STs running a lot of impressive graphics but not many games.

There was also even a bookshop; this was of special interest to us as we were looking for an obscure textbook supposedly only available in Manchester. It wasn't available, however, and Andrew had to go on an illegal undercover raid into the 'restricted' business section of the show, wearing a false ID card and pretending to be called Martin. The book wasn't there, either, but there were plenty of besuited gentlemen and **WORDSTAR** clones (**WORDSTAR** being the only program that has been copied more times than *Knight Lore*!).

Back in the main hall, there was plenty of gratuitous sex and violence to keep everyone happy; there was *Strip Poker II* from Martech, and adjacent to that the Palace stand was adorned with

larger-than-life posters of Maria Whittaker.

On the violent side, some deranged Rambo lookalike was striding around waving grenades. Other characters in costume included a Yogi Bear pushing Piranha's licence (smarter than the average bear but not smart enough to get out of wearing a sweaty bear suit all day), and the villain from Gremlin Graphics's *Basil The Great Mouse Detective*, who went around pickpocketing all and sundry and making people laugh.

But despite Piranha's promises, I failed to see Berk from *Trapdoor*, and had to make do with the cartoons they played continuously. On a more positive note, there was some really promising stuff on show: Martech's 2000AD licence *Slaine* should be great, Incentive was promoting *Driller* with lots of carefully-chosen freedom-oriented records to go with the concept of *Freescape* (see the **CRASH 3-D** feature which starts on page 53 - *Cross-Referencing Minion*), there was **SUPERNOVA** on the **PLAYERS** stand (c'mon, a little plug for my own game won't hurt, will it?) (nor will the review on pages 130-131), and Hewson's *Nebulus* looked clever, featuring some ingenious circular scrolling.

The very playable *Marble Madness* was very attractive in its Amiga incarnation, and of course there were the Newsfield stands, which this year were manned by real celebrities (as opposed to last year when I hadn't heard of anybody that I saw there).

The *PCW Show* is as much fun as it's always been. Just make sure you go in there with your eyes wide open, laugh off the silly razzmatazz of the big stands, and take absolutely nothing there seriously. You'll have yourself a great day out.

See you there next year . . . balloons and all.

ANTHONY BAILEY



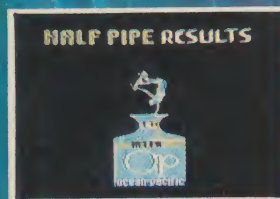
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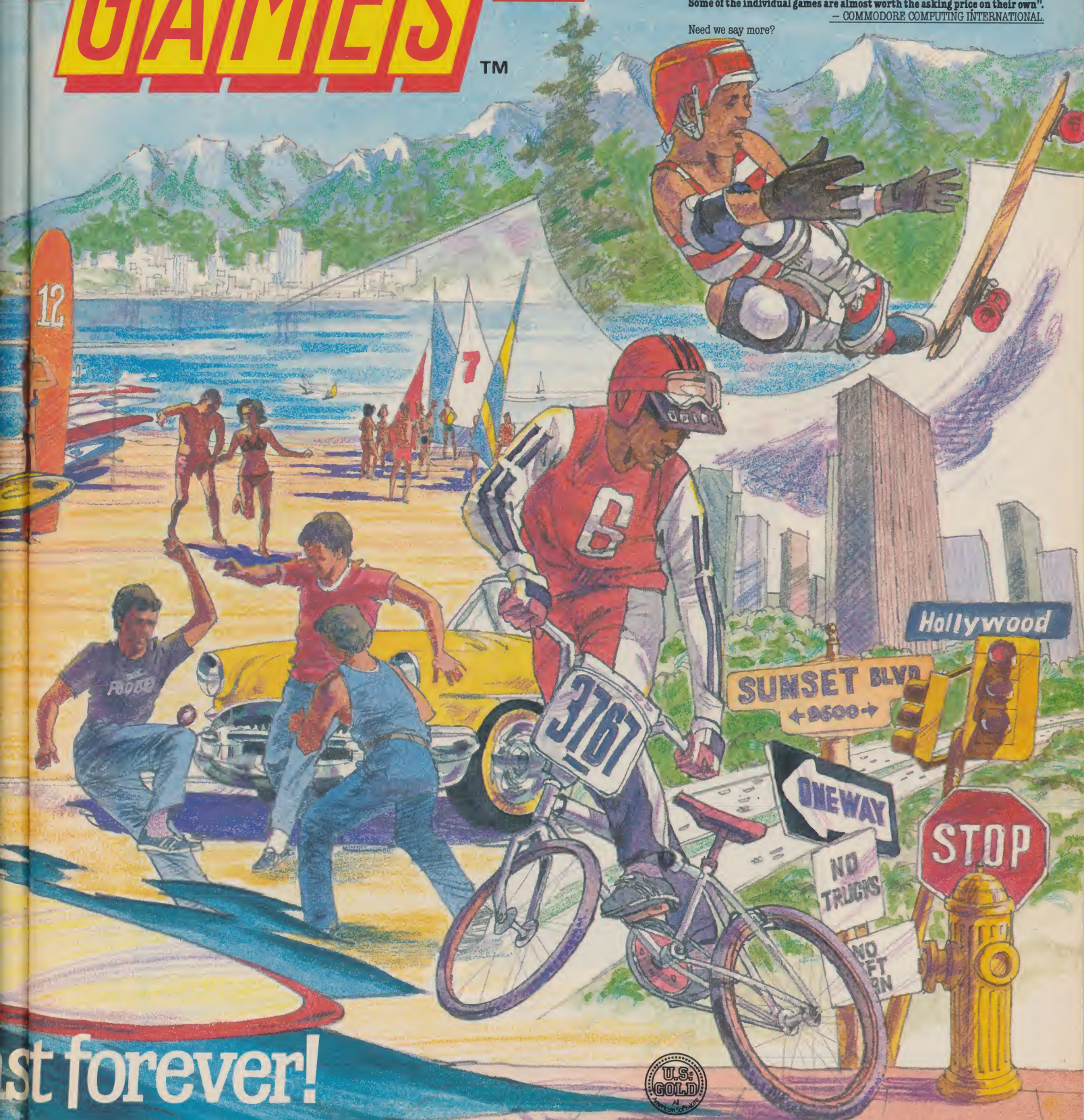
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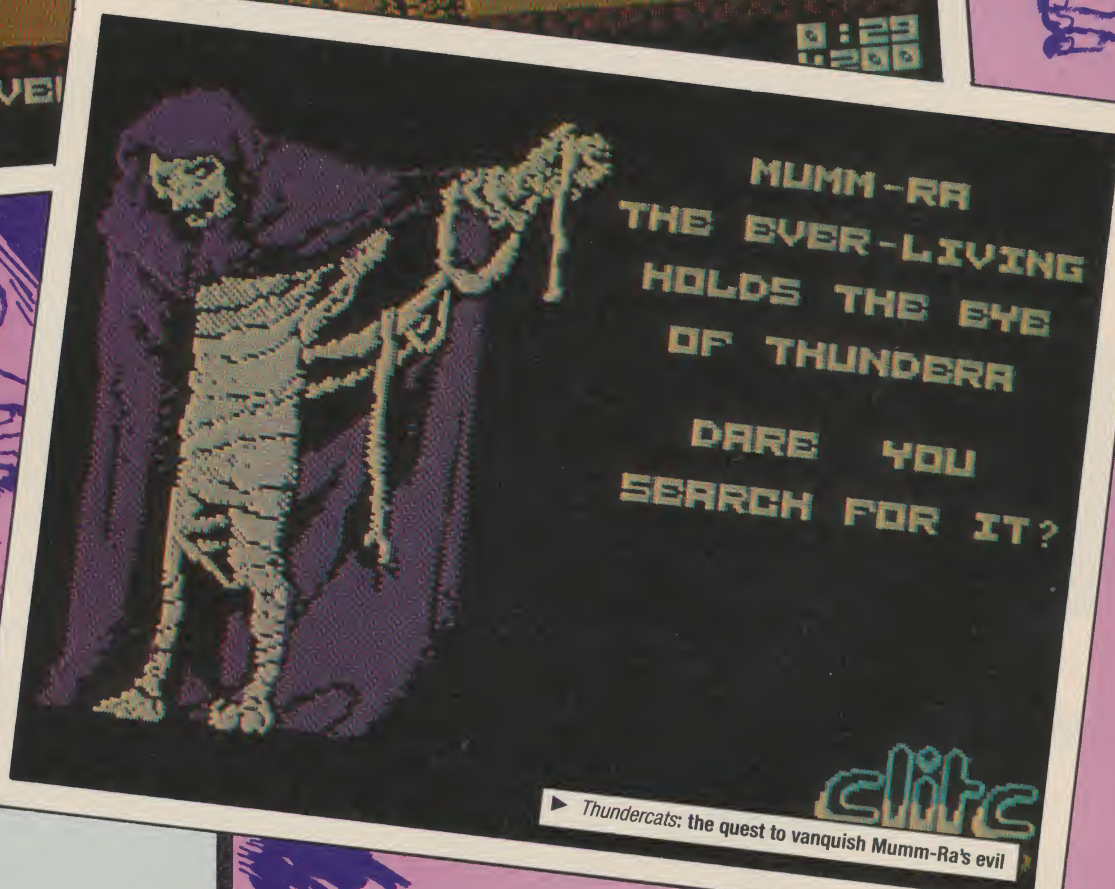
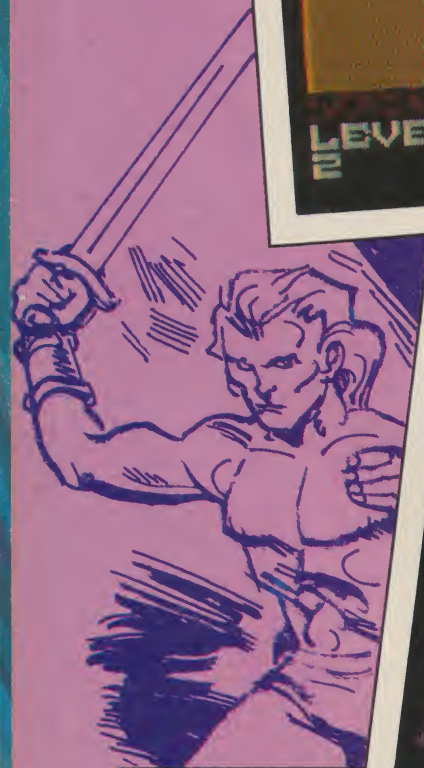


► Thundercat isn't the sort who miaows...

► 'Large, detailed and very well-animated graphics' with perfect scrolling colour



LEVEL 2



elite

► Thundercats: the quest to vanquish Mumm-Ra's evil

Producer: **Elite**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Gargoyle Games**

Mumm-Ra holds the Eye Of Thundera. Thundercat must search for it... and take it. But the warrior's quest is not to be easy, despite his six lives, for Mumm-Ra's burly thugs and dirty dwarfs and flapping bats and ugly hags are lined up against this hunk of he-man. And their every touch is lethal.

Undeterred by such astronomic odds, Thundercat runs onward through underground hallways, along stone walkways and across open plains; he leaps upward over

CRITICISM

"There's the hallmark of Gargoyle's programming in Thundercats – most notably in the large, detailed and very well-animated graphics. It's one of those games which you'll think is just too hard when you first play it, but after a bit of practice there shouldn't be much difficulty getting through at least three levels. The action is fast, and you'll need quick reactions. Thundercats is probably the best thing Elite has produced since Ghosts 'N' Goblins."

RICKY

91%

streams and ducks downward beneath the touch of hideous things.

Thundercat begins this TV licence with just a sword, which he must wield with increasing dexterity as Mumm-Ra's cohorts attack from all sides. But as our hero progresses he can take advantage

CRITICISM

"I can't say I've heard of these Thundercat chappies (though apparently they're pretty popular) – I must be a bit too old – so I can't really comment on the tie-in side of Thundercats. But on its own merits it succeeds admirably. The graphics can't be faulted: the screen is extremely colourful and the animation topnotch. The imposing enemies change from level to level so you never know what to expect, which makes you have just one more go... great stuff! I bet the TV series ain't as good as the game."

PAUL

91%

CRITICISM

"Wow! Thundercats is brilliant. The logo is very neatly drawn, and the in-game graphics match it; they're excellent in every respect. Considering that the programmers had to move the colour as well as the pixels, the scrolling is very smooth. At first, despite Thundercats's playability, I didn't think it'd last The Treatment and still be addictive, but two days later they had to prise me away from my Spectrum with a crowbar to make me write this comment! It's got weeks and weeks of playability just waiting to be used. And me, I'm still trying to finish the bonus screen after Level Two!"

MIKE

92%

of containers and items that conceal additional features. By destroying these with his weapon and then collecting what is revealed, Thundercat can add to his lives or obtain a different weapon, such as an energy-orb blaster.

A time limit is set for the completion of each level; if Thundercat successfully reaches the level's end, he is rewarded with a time bonus and a kill bonus, which depends on the number of foul fiends he has sent to meet their satanic maker.

At later levels, Thundercat can choose which perilous pathway he takes through the elements of earth, fire, air and water, and act as saviour to those who have been captured and held by the wickedness of Mumm-Ra.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: very detailed and beautifully-animated, with some neat digitised graphics
Sound: exhilarating tune and FX on 128K version – otherwise limited
Options: definable keys
General rating: a good-looking and exciting game that deserves to succeed

Presentation	92%
Graphics	90%
Playability	90%
Addictive qualities	92%
OVERALL	91%

XOR

Producer: Logotron

Retail price: £7.95

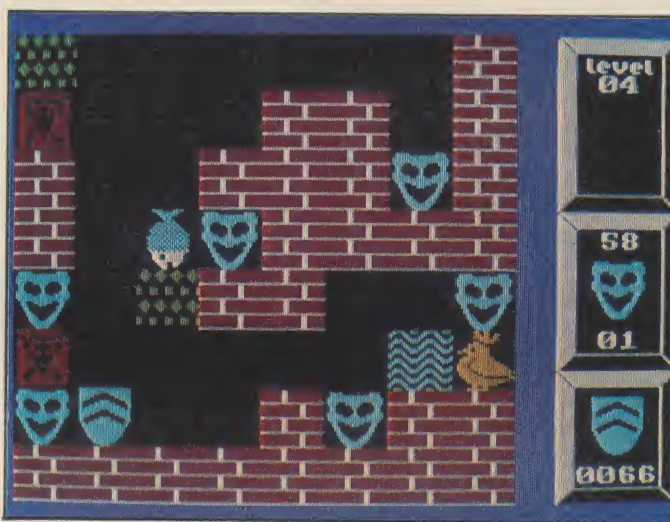
XOR presents the challenge of 15 brickwork mazes through which the player searches for masks, clearing each maze of masks before progressing to the next.

Clues can also be found in the form of map sections which show the maze you're in and the uncollected masks. Some routes are blocked by barriers that cannot be penetrated; other barriers can be broken through by the shield

NICK

"XOR's graphics are very simple, but it's addictive and the presentation is slick. It's a lot like a larger version of Cavelon, a very early Ocean game. Toggling between two characters – if you can call them that when they're only shields – is supposed to make your task easier, but it doesn't a bit. The only useful feature is the map that shows where all the uncollected masks are hiding, and because the screens are all basically the same it soon gets very boring."

50%



► Collecting the clues to 'XOR's true nature'

you operate. But none of these obstructions appear on the map screen – and the number of moves on each level is limited.

are collected, they form an anagram which can be solved to give 'a clue to XOR's true nature' (Logotron's words).

BEN

"XOR is a puzzle game in the genre of Survivors. It's well difficult, but becomes quite playable with perseverance – some of the later levels are much too tricky for me, though, so I gave in a fit of rage. The simplistic large characters and a fast but disconcerting scrolling routine leave little impression; I'd advise a few goes before buying."

63%

Further dangers await on higher levels. Springloaded chicks can pin you to a wall, dolls and fish fall when a supporting shield or shelf is removed, bombs explode and poison pits offer uninviting swims.

On exiting each level, you receive a letter; when all 15 letters

MIKE

"Despite poor scrolling, XOR isn't as bad as it might first strike you; the graphics are big and quite colourful, and the gameplay soon grows in attraction and addictivity."

60%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: simple but large and colourful
Sound: average tune and sound FX
Options: you can start on any level
General rating: a challenging puzzle game with little long-term appeal

Presentation	66%
Graphics	50%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	60%
OVERALL	58%

OUTCAST

Producer: **CRL**
Retail price: **£8.95**

Forced from his village and dispossessed of his powers by evil, an old wizard is left to wander in the wilds, rejected and despised. But slowly, so slowly, wizardry begins to trickle once more through his narrowing veins, filling him with new-found confidence. Returning to his home village he vows to restore his lost powers to their full vigour and take revenge upon the evil force that vanquished him.

The village is now inhabited by loathsome birds and malevolent dwarfish entities, hungry for the wizard's four lives.

The red energy spheres that occasionally appear can be collected to replenish these reserves, but imprudent wizardly

BEN

"Outcast is addictive and fun. Perhaps it's because I never get very far with each life that I want another go; perhaps it's the smooth graphics, moving at the right pace; perhaps it's even the easy-to-understand gameplay; whatever it is, I find Outcast very worthwhile."

86%

wanderings into the chasms, de-energising areas, and water pits that rupture the roads quickly deplete them again as the wizard struggles for survival.

Our becloaked warlock can protect his ancient bones with his

PAUL

"At first sight it seems Outcast might be something a bit special – the colourful graphics are well-designed and with the animated trees create an attractive atmosphere. But the problem is the lack of things to do. The enemies have no intelligence (do they ever?); they just float around waiting to be pushed off the screen with an 'arrow'. And it's a pity about the animation of the eponymous character – he looks really stupid when flying through the air!"

42%

► The age-old struggle between good and evil lies behind Outcast's fine graphics and mediocrally slow gameplay



basic energy spell; this magic destroys some creatures, but others are merely stung into temporary retreat.

The wizard progresses through his village world using a series of teleporters. Objects that he comes

across can add to his magical capabilities or increase his powers of attack, and with these new strengths the wizard can battle his way through the possessed village, an onscreen indicator showing how much of this strange world he has completed.

MIKE

"Outcast is, as the title suggests, fit only to be cast out from the ranks of popular software. It's quite easy to play, but I found it difficult to amass any significant score. The onscreen animation – stars, branches of trees – is quite pretty, but frustratingly you can play for ages without getting anywhere. There just isn't enough content in Outcast."


59%

COMMENT'S

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: very ornate but a bit jerky
Sound: good
Options: definable keys
General rating: not fast on action, but an enjoyable arcade adventure nonetheless

Presentation	78%
Graphics	69%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	59%
OVERALL	62%

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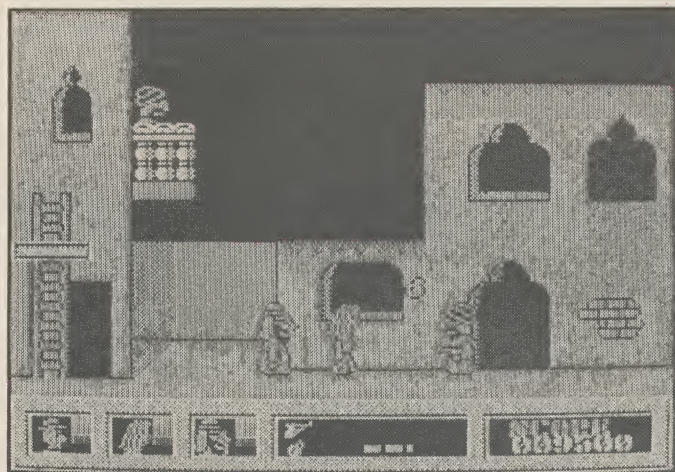
MYSTERY OF THE NILE

Producer: **Firebird**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Zigurat**

Oh, that wicked Abu-Sahl, his mother said he would come to no good... and now he's stolen the Jewel Of Luxor, more treasured than the pyramids and a lot more nickable. This Egyptian Arthur Daley intends to flog the precious chunk of rock for a fortune, and he must be stopped.

Archaeologist Nevada Smith, his assistant Janet Dwight and Al-Hasan, a peculiar hanger-on, are the only people who can thwart the evil one's plans to swell his building-society account. Each has different abilities with which to combat Abu-Sahl's guards, who seem to spring from every nook and cranny.

Beautiful Janet is first into the action; if wily enough to escape the clutches of the early marauding miscreants she can collect Al-Hasan and then Nevada from their hiding places. These two then follow in her wake, more

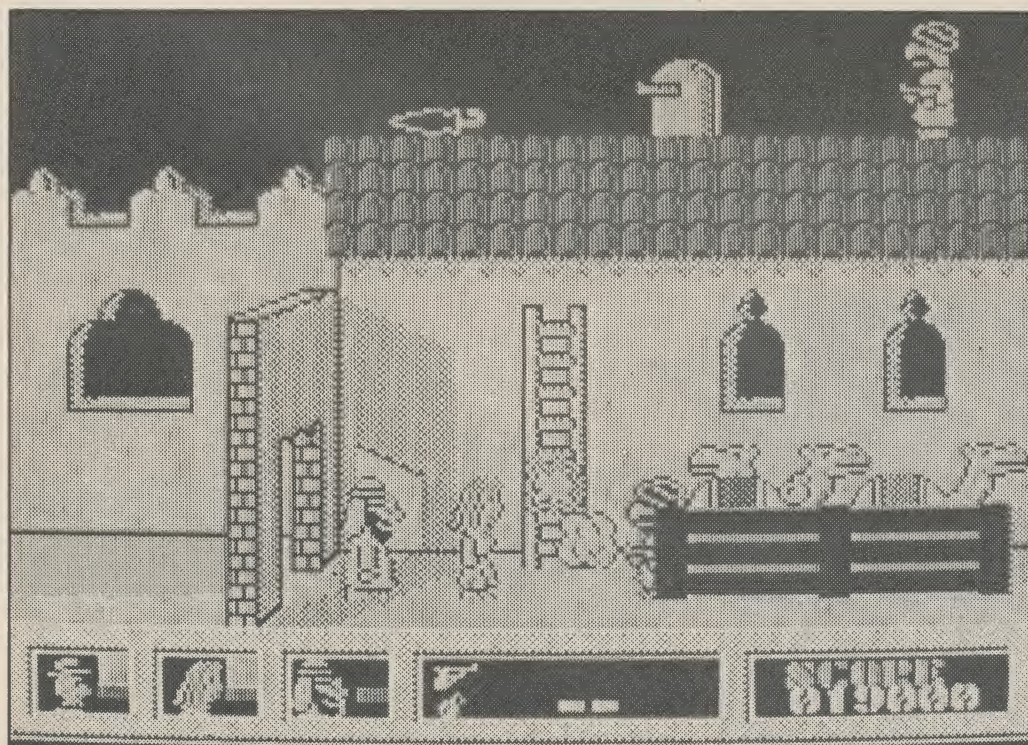


RICKY

"Graphically, *Mystery Of The Nile* is very detailed; the desert backdrops are captured well, as are the characters. It's playable, but becomes frustrating when you have your two companions bumbling around – under the control of the computer they're incredibly stupid and walk into the enemy freely, losing you a life in the process. Still, *Mystery Of The Nile* could be a relaxing alternative for the hardened shoot-'em-up fanatic."

72%

► You're Janet Dwight about to do in the camel-dealers in this scene from *Mystery Of The Nile*



PAUL

"Immediately I thought of US Gold's *Zorro*: a predominantly yellow screen, lots of little detailed and well-animated characters and a strong feeling of a hot and sweaty atmosphere. The screen arrangement is well-structured, with colour clearly-defined – ruling out clash and also keeping the display lively. *Mystery Of The Nile* is a very simple problem-solving game, the better for the quick flick-screen technique, and it certainly has character – though its lastability is doubtful."

70%

often a hindrance in their positioning than a help, till a character switch is made and one of them can take the lead.

Indiana – sorry, Nevada Smith and his companions can gather the weapons that they find about them, such as grenades and guns, and with them deal lethal injury to Abu-Sahl's henchmen, all of whom must be killed on each screen.

Nev, Jan and Al each have four lives that are reduced by imprudent contact with a bullet or dynamite stick fired or flung by those dirty bad guys.

Together they can defeat the awful Abu-Sahl; together they can also get themselves into a lot of trouble.

NICK

"*Mystery Of The Nile* is a fantastically addictive little game with cute graphics and some really good tunes thrown in. It's a bit confusing at the start, but with a bit of help from Paul Sumner (or my Playing Tips) you'll soon be on your way to completing it. The three main characters are excellently drawn and move around well. Though it's very simple, like a kid's cartoon, you'll get some enjoyment out of *Mystery Of The Nile*."

80%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston
Graphics: clean and well-defined with imaginative backdrops
Sound: rambling jolly tune, but meagre spot FX
General rating: a simple arcade adventure with humorous touches

Presentation	82%
Graphics	77%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	67%
OVERALL	74%

ACTION FORCE

Producer: **Virgin Games**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Gang Of Five**

Botsneda is an island under siege. COBRA has launched an attack and vital data has been left on a computer disk in the occupied zone, in this licence from the eponymous toys.

Flint, Lady Jaye and Quick Kick have been sent in using an AWE Striker craft to get that disk. To allow greater speed, the AWE has had its weaponry removed, so Snake Eyes must defend the craft from above, manoeuvring with the aid of a multidirectional helipack.

The way ahead is difficult for even the AWE and a path must be cleared through the forest of electrical-charge-generators, barricades and rocket silos.

Snake Eyes is equipped with a powerful gun, with which he can take out ground-to-air missiles fired from the silos (though if he's hit by one of the deadly projectiles, he loses one of his four lives). With this weapon he can also blast out sections of electrical discharges and barricades, and earn points by

piercing the targets that hang in the sky. However, if this hovering warrior flies into one before he's burst it, yet another life is removed from his meagre stock.

Concrete barriers seriously impede the progress of the AWE

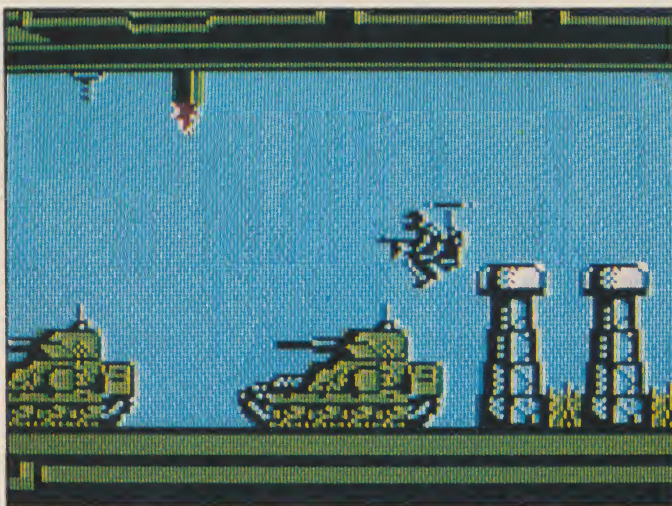
Striker, and open stretches of canal water cannot be crossed at all by the land-based vehicle. So pontoon bridge sections must be picked and carried by Snake Eyes to where they are needed. With a bridge complete, the Striker can move on.

Snake Eyes cannot be too profligate in his use of ammunition and fuel; his supplies are strictly limited. A warning is given when his fuel reserve has fallen to

dangerous levels. Both ammunition and fuel can be topped up, but neither should be picked up prematurely as already full tanks and magazines cannot take more.

CRITICISM

► That's Snake Eyes in his helithingy, defending the AWE Striker



● "Action Force is just too-oo-o hard. You're always on the move – there's no stopping in midflight for a quick read of *The Independent*, and though the idea is simple the awkward control method makes its appeal short-lived – especially for the age group at which the toys are aimed. And I can't really say this'll make me go out and buy the toys either!"

PAUL

41%

● "Action Force is a really well-presented, pathetic game. Once you've got past the slick ACTION*FORCE writing and music it looks, and plays, just like Durell's now ageing Harrier Attack (from preCRASH days). The houses and the main character are very crude and simplistic, and the scrolling and the irritating way the bombs explode up your posterior (Nick

ANGLEBALL

Producer: **M.A.D.**
Retail price: **£2.99**

Pool can never be the same again after you've taken your cue to a hexagonal table.

As in the standard game, coloured balls have to be hit into six pockets using the white cue ball. A cursor is used to align the

cue ball and a coloured object ball with the pocket. By creating the right angle the coloured ball can be hit into a pocket. Six of the coloured balls may be hit into the pockets in any order, but the black must be left till last, or a foul shot is incurred and the game lost.

Different types of spin (top, side and back) can be given to the cue ball, causing it to react after striking the coloured ball. In this

BYM

"The new-style hexagonal snooker table makes computer snooker easier, bringing the idea of clearing away all the balls within the realms of possibility. It doesn't take as long to get bored with Angleball as it does with every other snooker game (including the televised, professional type). But perhaps the strength factor needs a bit of tweaking – I find that either you give the shot full power and the cue ball trickles along into the hole, or you try to kiss the pink and the cue ball trickles along till it comes within close range of a ball. And if you do happen to make a mistake, or find a screen where you can't get a clear break, you'll need more than the stingy three misses you're allowed. Still, this is the best snooker simulation yet."

60%

► The English always form cues



way a good position can be achieved for the next shot. A shot's strength is regulated by altering the length of the cue in the box at the bottom right of the screen.

For every ball potted, points are awarded. When all the balls on the table have been potted the frame

is over and another one can be played with a different arrangement of balls. (A frame-designer allows you to add your own ball arrangements.) If three shots are missed, the game is over and it's time to hang up your cue.

A frame-designer allows you to set up your own starting position.

NICK

"Well, what is Angleball? Is it some type of hexagonal snooker? Has Dennis Taylor got to get a pair of even weirder glasses? Well, actually it's quite a good simulation. Do you remember way, way back when a game just called Snooker was released (the days of no loading screens!)? This one's very similar. The balls are all different colours, and as usual in simulations, there's plenty of colour clash. And when you hit a ball with your cue it doesn't roll, it just hovers! But once you've got used to it you can get a lot of fun out of Angleball. It's one to play on a rainy night (probably in Ludlow, where 99.9% of the rain falls!)."

42%

Roberts's Daft Dictionary) make up a bad game with no lastability."

NICK

24%

● "Action Force comes as a unwelcome surprise from the Gang Of Five, though the front end is very pleasant indeed. Unfortunately the game itself lacks substance, and jerky, if colourful, graphics do little to entice you into it."

RICKY

39%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: colourful, but the scrolling is jerky

Sound: little

Options: definable keys

General rating: too difficult, unattractive and a wasted licence

Presentation	48%
Graphics	28%
Playability	23%
Addictive qualities	23%
OVERALL	35%

PAUL

"A nice variation on snooker, this, though I can't really see people going out in their droves to purchase it. I'd love to play the full-size table version - the computer version seems to have quite a bit of trouble when working out the correct angles from your spin, speed and table position. The one-player game is the most challenging, and though Angleball will be fun for the snooker/pool/eight-ball fanatics, it won't be too attractive to anyone else."

51%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: simple but clear

Sound: informative bells and whistles

Options: redefinable keys, one or two players or one player versus computer, frame-designer

General rating: a neat snooker variation

Presentation	66%
Graphics	50%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	50%
OVERALL	51%

PROFESSIONAL SKI SIMULATOR

Producer: **Code Masters**

Retail price: **£1.99**

Authors: **The Oliver Twins**

what's this hurtling toward you?

It's a very awkward-looking Christmas tree that doesn't want

NICK

"This simulation is so good it's just like being on the slopes. The graphics are very similar to those in BMX Simulator, also by The Oliver Twins and from Code Masters. The slopes are highly detailed, which makes it nice to look at, but tricky to ski down! The only problem is that when you fall behind, or get too far ahead, for that matter, you go off the screen because it scrolls down slowly without caring where the player is. And the radar's very confusing. So you have to be patient to get anywhere in this excellent game, but don't forget - practice makes perfect!"

87%

ROBIN

"Skiing isn't the easiest of sports to simulate; Pete Cooke tried two-and-a-half years ago with Ski Star 2000 (Issue 14) and came up with a pleasing 3-D game. Here the different types of snow and a sense of three dimensions are created quite effectively by the clever use of shading. It takes a while to get the hang of the game, and the way the screen scrolls downward regardless of what's happening on screen is also frustrating. But once the controls have been mastered Professional Ski Simulator is an enjoyable and difficult maze game, though it offers little long-term interest."

71%

► It looks very easy till you're on the slope

to move. Before you know it, you're stopped suddenly in your tracks by the tree without so much as a 'sorry'; the instructor shouts down 'you're disqualified!' and you're carried off on a stretcher.

In *Professional Ski Simulator* you can choose one-player or two-player mode. The skiing is easy but getting every single flag is a mite more difficult, and you're timed on each piste. The time limits get tougher the further you progress.

It's presented in bird's-eye view. The left and right controls refer to the skier's view rather than the player's - he is skiing 'toward' the player - so when you press LEFT or move the joystick left he goes toward the right of the screen and vice versa.

If you ski too slow you can go off the screen, and then have to play using the radar - a touch of unreality, though the game is supposedly 'based on the authors' experiences in Austria'!

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: monochromatic and well-detailed

Sound: good in-game tune

Options: definable keys, one or two players

General rating: a challenging, playable simulation with some frustrating flaws

Presentation	75%
Graphics	77%
Playability	82%
Addictive qualities	79%
OVERALL	79%



BALLBREAKER

Producer: CRL
Retail price: £7.95
Authors: The Zen Room

Into a 3-D screen drops a ball. You control a bat that can be moved along one edge of the screen to prevent the sphere dropping into the black void which lies behind your bat. Should the ball pass you, then one of your four lives is lost.

If you use the bat to deflect the ball onto the barrier of blocks that faces you, most of the blocks can be destroyed, sending the ball rebounding toward your bat.

BYM

"Ballbreaker is definitely the best version of Breakout on the market. But is a brilliant rebirth of an age-old concept worth £7.95? I think not. Despite graphics of the highest quality, squash versus computer doesn't stand up against blasting aliens out of the sky: and the sudden appearance of hopping kangaroos and whizzing spikes is a feeble attempt to liven up this game."

60%

BEN

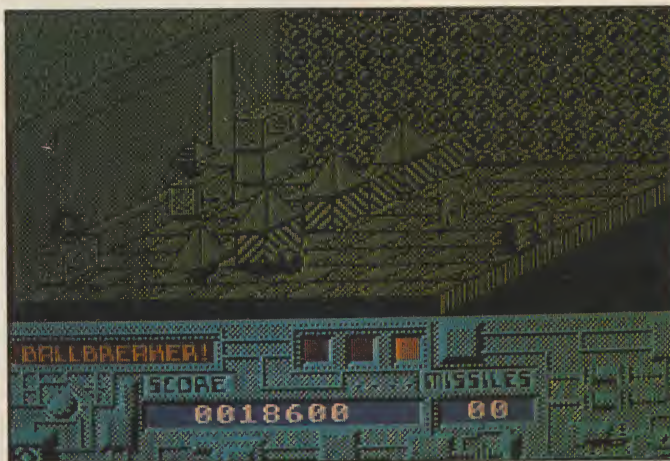
"Ballbreaker is based on a brilliant idea – 3-D Breakout. What could be better? Play is difficult, to say the least: the ball is dropped into play, it shoots off toward the edge of the screen and if you're not quick you'll lose your first life. The speed of the ball varies, depending on the number of things moving onscreen and on whether you've collected a speed-up block, and this can be disconcerting. But after a few hours of play Ballbreaker will grab you – honest."

70%

Those blocks that do not submit to the sphere's deadly touch can be destroyed by one of the missiles that you carry – you start the game with ten. Points are awarded for every block destroyed.

passage back to your side of the wall, where once again you must move fast to hit it.

Different blocks have different properties. Some are destroyed from the front; others can only be



► Ballbreaker – 3-D Breakout!

If the ball passes through a gap in the wall, falling blocks can temporarily halt its return. But the sphere continues to make destructive contact with the rear of the wall till it has opened a

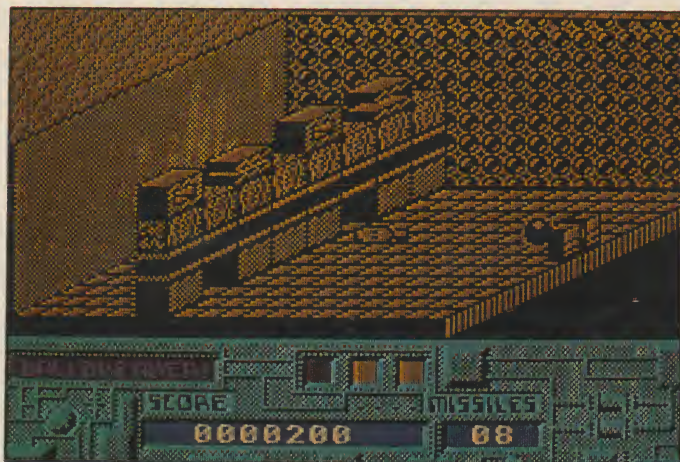
destroyed from the rear; some offer extra lives or missiles, others change the size of your bat or allow you to exit to the next screen. On higher levels, the destruction of certain bricks activates aliens who

GALACTIC GAMES

IT'S RATHER IK BUT A LOT, IT

Inter-galactic art. E
Pit your joystick in a series of tre
These events jud
metamorph mtho





► Slow and unplayable, or the best of its genre?

PAUL

"You can go only so far with a concept before the additions take over the original idea, and this is the main problem with Ballbreaker. Working out the 3-D and collision-detection takes the computer so long that the game's playability suffers unbelievably. It's vital with Breakout-type games that the speed is kept constant and the rebound angle realistic – Ballbreaker fails on both these counts and this bad design is infuriating. I have nothing against the 3-D idea – it's surprisingly attractive – but changes should be improvements."

62%

can easily remove one of your bat's lives with their lethal touch.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

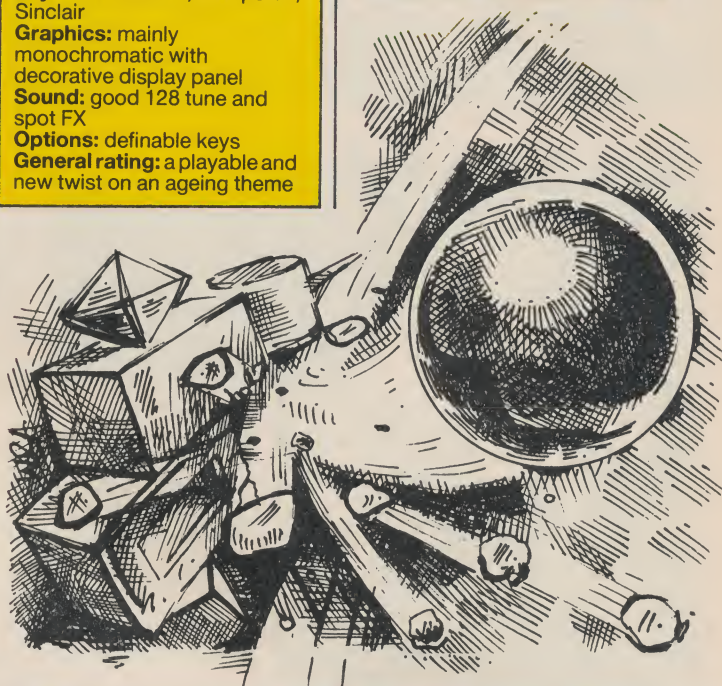
Graphics: mainly monochromatic with decorative display panel

Sound: good 128 tune and spot FX

Options: definable keys

General rating: a playable and new twist on an ageing theme

Presentation	79%
Graphics	77%
Playability	59%
Addictive qualities	61%
OVERALL	64%



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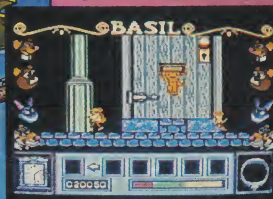
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(Lee Rodwell - The Times, September 1987)



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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



The autumn is with us and winter drawers on. Having just finished writing up a few of the earlier months of the year for the Christmas Special Lookback article, I'm reminded that the 'summer software slump' seemed late this year, and that it should have ended with the PCW Show. However, the quantity and quality of games received for review this issue seems to have been dire, with few notable exceptions. Honestly, one does expect something to brighten up the encroaching gloaming, and fires of fallen leaves cleared from around the winter vegetables isn't quite what I mean. Still, enough of my moans, I'm sure you've got plenty of your own! I'll kick off with the Letter Of The Month which has something to say about responsibility...

A REASONED VIEW

Dear Lloyd
Please do not dismiss this as another fanatical complaint; at least, not until you have considered it seriously.

Firstly, violence: I am not about to claim that Satan is possessing Oliver Frey, or that CRASH corrupts small children, I am merely offering some advice.

I'm not shocked by the artwork in CRASH, and neither, it seems, are most readers. But some people are. These people are mostly outsiders to the world of computers; parents who happen to see CRASH once in a while, or concerned Christians who see it on newsstands. It's all very well to make fun of these people, but their opinions count. The attitude of the general public towards computers, computer games and computer magazines is primarily one of either scorn – thinking the whole business to be infantile – disgust or outright hostility.

As I said, these people are outsiders, whose opinions are often misguided, but their views are becoming widespread. Recently an article in *The Guardian* condemned computer games for the same reasons as the writers of the letters in Issue 43 gave. Alongside the article was Oliver Frey's *Barbarian* illustration. I found the whole thing laughable, but at the same time I realised that many people would read and believe it. Mocking the people who complain is just escaping the problem; the computer world is getting a very bad reputation, and CRASH is just enforcing it.

Your CRASH History was a very timely reminder of what Oliver's artwork used to be like: can anyone honestly say they prefer the *Barbarian* cover to Issue 5. Even if you ignore the question of subject matter, the artwork is immeasurably better. It is cleaner and much more detailed, and in my opinion has never been equalled. What's wrong with a return to the old style? The early covers were dynamic, excellently drawn and above all, original.

If nothing else, this return would make CRASH more popular with parents and the general public.

Secondly, sexism: Of course, there's nothing dangerous or obscene about CRASH, but the

attitude towards women you, the software houses and some readers seem to hold, is infantile, annoying and, to my mind, offensive.

The arrival of Hannah Smith was like the appearance of a girl in an all-boys comprehensive. Remarks about 'girlies', 'girlie perfume', 'girlie lipstick' and so on popped up everywhere. Obviously this was meant as a joke, but it just shows your team's immature attitude. There have been other instances since, but Issue 45 was particularly bad. The *Athena* review included phrases like 'voluptuous Athena, goddess of wisdom – worra woman', 'tired of cleaning her heavenly home', 'our bikini beauty', 'our dynamic damsel' and 'the curvaceous fighter'.

Okay, so reviews are supposed to be lively and punchy, but this smacks of Page Three. I don't know who wrote it, but whoever did should be advised that to be a hip jive (they all evidently want to keep up their reputations) you don't have to resort to schoolboy humour.

A small, but telling point, is the letter about the typical Game Over advert: 'the artwork was cunningly done over the... um... naughty parts'. Your reply mentions 'the offending part'. Is the word 'nipple' really so embarrassing? Oliver Frey's artwork worsens the situation: his illustration on pages 98-99 of Issue 44 was typical of his brand of pseudoporn. Just because Palace do it, do you have to follow?

All these points seem minor, but they paint a sorry picture of the computer world – populated by immature males who either lust for, or giggle at women.

I think I've backed up my points reasonably. CRASH is the leading computer magazine in the UK, can't you set an example to others?

Will Broker, London, SE18

As so much has already been said about the Barbarian cover artwork, and indeed many other Oli Frey illustrations, I won't dwell on the subject, other than to say that your reasons for your unease do you credit Will.

The Athena review was obviously poking affectionate fun at the whole hyperbole of gods, goddesses, superheroes,

ultraspeed arcade action etc, which in truth most CRASH review intros do. It's true that nearly all games have male heroes – the 'sexism in software' which was the subject of recent correspondence in the Computer Trade Weekly paper – but CRASH is only reviewing other people's product. The problem may manifest itself in these pages but it doesn't start with us. And if we said 'nipple' in CRASH – used in its most obvious context as a part of female anatomy – I've no doubt we would receive dozens of complaints far less rational than yours!

Incidentally, the illustration referred to from Issue 44, was originally painted by Oliver as a background to a CRASH MICRO GAMES ACTION mail order advertisement placed in other magazines before CRASH magazine even started, so I'm not so sure whether your reference to a cleaner age for Oli really holds water!

Still Will, for being a rational Forum correspondent, and for raising some interesting points, I'm giving you the £30 software prize for Letter Of The Month. Let us know what you would like to receive.

LM

MISDIRECTED FOOTBALL

Dear Lloyd

As a busy father of three children, I don't get much time to play computer games, but one which has had me riveted over the last six months or so has been a game called *Football Director*. I was therefore amazed to see it reviewed in October's CRASH and given only 13%!

As a football strategy game, it easily surpasses all others and is far superior to the much-praised but out-of-date *Football Manager*.

It is by far the most realistic and challenging game of its type.

My son Stephen (aged 12) agrees with me and has spent many, many hours playing the game. It certainly requires patience, thought, and the ability to suffer setbacks calmly, and it's not easy, but that is all part of its appeal!

Mike Gibbard, Sandford-On-Thames, Oxford

As is usually the case, personal taste dictates preferences, but before I give my answer, I had another outraged letter on the same subject...

Dear Lloyd

Upon reading through my latest CRASH I came across a review for *Football Director*. Ah! This will get a good review, I thought. But when I glanced across the page I noticed the rating of 13%. A printing error, I thought, but when I checked with the comments I realised this was no error. Have you gone mad?

I own well over 20 football games and I can tell you this is by far the best. Just because it has no graphics or sound doesn't make it rubbish. The colour is well used despite what your reviewer said, and it has five times as many features as *Football Manager*, although your reviewer was obviously too stupid to spot them (eg European Cups, £1,000,000 players to name only two).

And whoever reviewed this game must have a minimum knowledge of football due to the naming of the team – (ie 'Truckers'), and you even got the price wrong. I can strongly recommend this game to any football fan, and it's worth every penny.

Michael Sharkey (ex-CRASH reader), Stockport, Cheshire

You're probably right that naming the team 'Truckers' on our screen

DRIVER

IN THE NEW DIMENSION



shot left us wide open to attack, but don't make the mistake of thinking that was a reviewer, for the screen shots are not the reviewers' department. On the other hand, I think you are picking on a rather unimportant point there.

Whilst I went along with Derek Brewster's oft-stated argument of some three years ago that just because adventures were written

largely in BASIC, or because they used the undefined Spectrum character set, that it didn't mean they couldn't do an adequate job—presentation isn't everything if the game underneath is great in itself. However, I fail to see why 'football manager' fans shouldn't get properly presented programs, and, as the review pointed out, in many important respects Football Director is lacking. The response

is slow, due to the BASIC programming, although in fairness, there is a lot more detail packed in than ever there was in Football Manager.

And an argument, which may well be put up, that the reviewers in question were all unsympathetic to this type of game, avoids the point that had they considered the program to be much better than they did, it would have received a far higher rating, EVEN IF this still didn't satisfy your view! Oh, and we DID get the price correct, although you can also buy it direct from D & H Games for £7.50
LM

BOXING CLEVERLY

Dear Lloyd
Having read CRASH since Issue 15, I've witnessed many changes in the reviews. Amongst them are the additions of the reviewers' names and marks, and the use of full-colour throughout the reviews. The introduction of a **Presentation** rating was long overdue as was the withdrawal of **Use of computer and Getting started**.

However the removal of the subheadings **Keyboard control**, **Skill levels** etc, leaves the comments box looking very obscure.

ZZAP! 64's comments section is brilliant since they explain why a game got 95% for graphics or 12% for instability for example. Why can't (or doesn't) CRASH do the same. I have written my own example.

Zynaps - Hewson £7.95

Keys (definable)/Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2

Presentation 90%

Attractive title screen, 2-player, pause, quit and redefinable keys options

Graphics 93%

Fantastic detail, smooth scrolling and super use of colour

Sound 90%

Great tune, range of atmospheric effects

Playability 92%

Easy to use control method and icons make for instant fun

Addictive Qualities 91%

12 fast and furious levels of arcade action, enough to keep even Ben Stone going for months

Overall 91%

A classic shoot-'em-up, knocks Nemesis for six

This still incorporates all the comments box features and makes the ratings stand out more as well as making them more informative. So come on Lloyd let's improve the comments box so it matches the high ZZAP! standard.

Ian Kerr, Northwick, Cheshire

The Frontline comments and ratings are combined in this way... it's really a lot to do with tradition. AMTIX! also had a system like ZZAP!, but they both came after CRASH and so could be seen as an improvement... I suppose, though I'm not convinced of that. I know from my

duties on ZZAP! that those little comments, so easy to deal with for a great game, become a tyranny to the reviewers and have always been regarded with very mixed feelings.

Then you must consider the original aim of CRASH reviews (in the dark days when a magazine review was traditionally 50 words long and three months after the event), that the actual written criticisms, followed by the comments box, should provide all the relevant notes to explain the reasons for the ratings. This was because Roger Kean deeply wanted the criticisms rather than the ratings to suggest the value of any game.

I started by saying the reviews are a tradition, but as you say, we have altered their structure from time to time, and it may be that this still isn't perfect, but I feel strongly that to add further weight to the ratings by providing comments explaining them is really only doubling up, and runs the risk of undoing CRASH's original stance.

What do other readers think?

LM

THREATENED PROTECTION

Dear Lloyd
Through all the years I've been a CRASH reader, people have never stopped sending you letters slugging off our Oli. Well I'm really sick of it, so a short time ago, in the hours of darkness, hidden away from the eyes of the law, a secret organisation was formed, called the **Oliver Frey Protection Society**.

If we see anyone in any way saying the slightest niggles of a complaint about our Oli, then our members who live in the victim's district go on a little visit to the unlucky person for a weeny chat!

This should soon bring an end to the problem. Enclosed with this letter is your very own membership card. You can start a branch of the club in Ludlow. Remember readers, we're out there watching you...

Watch this space for the Oliver Frey Fan Club coming soon.
Da Boss Man, Little Dale, Sheffield

I'm already a fan; and here in Ludlow, if you're not a card-carrying club member, they can haul you up before the Un-Newsfield Activities Commission. That's bad.

LM

TAI-PANNED

Dear Lloyd
I buy your mag for the previews and reviews, because I like to know what is coming on to the market, and if I'm to buy a game I find it very useful to know basically what I'm going to get for my cash. Also, I appreciate knowing that if a game has been Reviewed rather than PREviewed, I can go out and buy it without a six-month delay waiting for the game to be written

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to match the advertising.

Therefore, having seen the preview of *Tai-Pan* (and all the reviews in other magazines) I thought could this be another *Elite*, the game to end all games – again? When can I buy this wondrous advance in computer software technology? Why, when CRASH gives it a review. This happened in August and off I went in search of my new alter ego. I looked in Swindon, Bath, Exeter, Birmingham, Barnstable, Reading, and even went to Basingstoke (and to actually go there I must have been desperate), but no *Tai-Pan*. I was starting to think that maybe it only existed in Ludlow, but no-one knows where that is, so I couldn't find out.

So what do you think you are doing? Why join the ranks of other magazines by reviewing nonexistent games?? How do I end this letter without becoming offensive? How do I say that if you do this again I shall find Ludlow and come and stick your magazine up your nostril? Why so many questions? I don't know, so I'll just say;

Yours sincerely, (or am I)
Kevin Whittle, Aldbourne, Wilts

Well now and again, Kevin, we do review games in CRASH which still don't appear for sale till after the magazine has gone on sale. Firebird's Gyron, one I can recall, was reviewed some three months before it appeared (though I think we did say it would be a while). That was, and often is, because we get a reviewable copy and we think our job is to inform you as soon as we can. Then of course, there are those instance, like *Tai-Pan* where, with the best of intentions, the software house has problems. *Tai-Pan* ran into unforeseen programming compression difficulties, especially for the 48K Spectrum. Compared to other magazines, we did look a bit late in reviewing it, though the very first finished 128 version arrived only days before going to press, so arguably CRASH was the first with a finished copy review. It was then two weeks after CRASH came out before *Tai-Pan*'s on sale date happened.

Sorry if you feel we let you down, but Ludlow's ever so hard to find...

LM

THE TOP 480K

Dear Lloyd,
You wanted more computer deejay's with charts to write in, so here I am with my Top 10 on a 48K.

- 1 Quazatron
- 2 Stainless Steel
- 3 Ping Pong
- 4 Ghost Hunters
- 5 Zynaps
- 6 Uridium
- 7 Ranarama
- 8 Mike
- 9 Starquake
- 10 Firebird

On a different note, CRASH is now an all colour mag. great, so why were there a good half dozen screen shots in MONO? This

carelessness totally ruined the look of *Xecutor*.

Apart from that, CRASH has improved tenfold since I started to buy it. All the extra features... it's just unbelievable. The arcade reviews are especially good (even if you are a little late with some of them. I spend a pretty penny on *R-Type* and *Double Dragon* in early July).

I must also congratulate Newsfield on the release of their new baby – THE GAMES MACHINE. It is absolutely brilliant! It was amazing how many features were crammed into so few pages (132 pages – few?)

May you have a long and prosperous future.
Richard Davy, Silsden, W Yorkshire

Sometimes you can't win! The monochrome screen shots of Xecutor, Sun Star, and Solomon's Key happened for the simple reason that the games arrived too late to be in colour. Would you rather we had left them out till the following month? You see, about four days before CRASH goes to press is the last possible moment anything can be in full colour, after that it's black-and-white or nothing. Thanks for the other kind comment though!

LM

DISGUSTED, HORRIFIED, APPALLED

Dear Lloyd,
I was disgusted when I picked up CRASH 44 and saw the front cover. How dare you print such rubbish with the full knowledge that 20-year-olds read this mag. Don't you realize what the sight of a navel can do to adults of this age?

If Oli Frey is so obsessed with navels, may I suggest he joins the BBC (belly-button club) instead of inflicting this perverted trash on innocent adults.

I put up with the picture gruesomely depicting a red carnation on Fred Astaire's lapel, but now you have gone too far. I am cancelling my 30-year-old son's subscription as I feel you obviously cannot be trusted to print decent and nonpornographic pictures on the front cover of your magazine.

May I suggest in future you take more care and do not print such bloodthirsty pictures, as well as acting more responsibly towards 20-year-old youngsters.
Ben Wood (age 193 2/3), Southwell, Notts

Historically speaking, red carnations were not a bloodthirsty symbol, but more a romantic notion that the wearer was about to burst into song and dance. However, as they were usually only seen by other people in black-and-white (probably because they arrived too late to be reviewed in colour, or perhaps because they hadn't yet invented colour film stock), no-one was upset by them.

Sorry we upset your tender-aged son.

LM

FAN THE ZINE FLAMES

Dear Lloyd

In recent Forums, there seems to have been a discrepancy in what *The Bug* thinks the role of fanzines is, and what almost everyone else thinks. As the editor of a truly unbiased fanzine, *Reflex*, I think I should put forward my opinions on the matter.

Contrary to what Jeffrey Davy believes, fanzines are not, never were and never will be the biggest force in the software industry. However, the rising number of fanzines seems to suggest that a large market is out there for them. If I may draw a comparison, I see fanzines as equivalent to budget software: generally poorer quality but selling in sufficient quantities for the software industry to sit up and listen. As stated by Barnaby Page in the article, The Budget Boom (CRASH 45), '... and when you're blowing a £10 note anyway, you don't miss another couple of quid'.

The same is true for fanzines. If you spend £1.25 on CRASH, you won't bother about another 30p for an eye-catching, straight-to-the-point fanzine. Mastertronic don't whinge and moan about companies like Players, Code Masters and The Power House coming onto the market and stealing some of their revenue, when they're all budget houses. So why do *The Bug* get upset when more fanzines get published? What are they afraid of...?

What is attractive about fanzines is that their views are generally fresh, sometimes controversial and they give their readers what they want – 100% computer entertainment from people of around their own age.

The above reasons would appear to be the very reasons why I feel *The Bug* has failed. They see themselves on an equal footing with CRASH, *Your Sinclair*,

Sinclair User etc, and it leads to their 'editorial team' writing stale and arrogant dogma in their magazine. It can also blind them to the reality of writing a fanzine and lead to silly fantasies which are surely above 16-year-old boys (eight telephone lines indeed!)?

The Bug's views are at least laughable, at most dangerous. What place has 'loony left' propaganda in magazines about computer games? *The Bug* is bought by readers presumably because of its discerning reviews, not because people want to find out what the lads have to say about the latest 'sexist, racist or heterosexual' games (I don't think I care to find out what qualifies as 'heterosexual').

I find *The Bug*'s attitude to be one of rank hypocrisy, which is borne out by Jeffrey Davy's remarks on *Your Sinclair*'s Fanzine Of The Year awards. Although he found the competition distasteful and unfair, it did not stop him entering *The Bug* and accepting a £50 prize! I'm sure this £50 could have gone to a more gracious (and probably more deserving) fanzine.

If CRASH readers are sick of hearing about *The Bug* and their political editors (and I don't blame them!) then they should contact *Reflex* – a totally unpolitical games fanzine – at 21 Berry Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire, KA12 0LJ, with 30p for the latest issue. I would also highly recommend EPROM from Tony Worrall, 328 The Maltings, Penworthan, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9FD. Both of the above are unashamedly dedicated to Spectrum games, not the Labour Party.

Phil Graham, Glasgow, G43 2BY

I can see some point in your comparison between fanzines and mags like ours (or those others you mentioned that I'm not allowed to) and budget and full-price software, although it fails in the sense that newsagents don't actually sell fanzines on the counter alongside their regularly distributed magazines. Roger Kean told me he met Jeffrey Davy on the first day of The PCW Show at the opening press conference

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(where, incidentally, the revered and much-bracketed one made a speech of some sort), and he told Roger he was pleased, at least, with the recent publicity they had received in CRASH.

On page 150 of this issue, there's another Fanzine File for you to peruse, but in the meantime, does ANYONE have anything good to say about The Bug – surely someone must! And I don't mean you Jeffrey, either!

LM

CRASH NO HUMOUR SHOCK

Dear Lloyd

A few points:

1. The CRASH Sampler was great. The loading screens from *Mean Streak* and *Athena* were fab, the graphics from *Driller* were brilliant and the music from *Trantor* was amazing. I for one will definitely buy *Trantor*, *Driller* and *Ikari Warriors* as soon as they come out.

2. In the October issue you printed a letter from John Hay, who said CRASH was boring, with no sparkle or humour. CRASH is the most exciting and original computer mag in the country. Things like 3-D pages, free demos, CRASH History, great competitions, video reviews and more pages than any other mag prove my point.

CRASH sparkles from cover to cover and has just the right level of humour in it. Humour in other mags such as *Your Sinclair* and *Sinclair User* is far too childish, they have nothing serious in them at all.

I first bought CRASH Issue 10 and I didn't even have a Spectrum! I owned a Vic 20, and didn't realise CRASH was a Spectrum-only magazine. After reading it I parted company with my Vic and bought a Speccy! I've been reading CRASH ever since, and it's improved with every issue. All in all, CRASH is the real thing.

Now that we must pay an extra 25p surely we deserve to see a photo of your good self?

Norm Burns, Belfast 14

No you don't, the 25p's got nothing to do with it! Besides (and here comes the truth, at long last), for so long I existed in CRASH without a photo – as did Roger Kean for that matter – that it became a sort of lucky charm not to appear. Now it's what some people would call a phobia.

I don't think CRASH has lost any of its humour and certainly none of its sparkle. Okay, it has lost some of those amusing little spelling errors we used to have (because Barnaby can spell and Roger used to have what he called a creative freedom from the conventional restraints of language), but have you noticed how some of those other mags you mention (but which I'm not allowed to) have adopted the funny little ways CRASH used to have with spelling and grammar?

LM

A SPARKLESS INDUSTRY

Dear Lloyd

I've never written to a magazine before, but felt I had to after reading John Hay's letter in the October issue.

I felt his comments were correct, if somewhat misdirected. Before I get lynched, let me explain!

He says that CRASH is boring, lost its sparkle, etc. What he should have said was that the computer industry in general is boring and lacks excitement.

I started learning about computers in 1982. In those days, a 5K Vic-20 cost me £200. Then, along came a new breed of computers – smaller, larger memories and better graphics. Then, hardly a week went by without some innovative new computer or peripheral appearing. New computer companies sprang up overnight, seeking livings from their garden sheds.

That was what kept the industry alive and buzzing with excitement – new and interesting computers, peripherals and innovative software – didn't you sit, mouth open, stunned, after playing *The Hobbit* for the first time? I know I did!

Nowadays, there are no new computers – the only 'new' machines are really old ones with a few extra bits bolted on; the Spectrum +2/+3 are to all intents and purposes Spectrum 48s with a few extra chips and data storage. Likewise the Commodore 128 has very little new over the C64.

We don't even have the prospect of new and innovative software to look forward to. Well over 99% of all new releases are arcade machine conversions, or poor-quality licensed games.

Original games are few and far between, unfortunately. What's needed is a change. If the hardware has been pushed to its limits, then maybe it's time for some totally new hardware.

If this can't be done, at a price the man in the street can afford, then I seriously fear for the future of the computer industry.

As for CRASH being boring, all I can say is, 'Rubbish!'

I have bought CRASH from issue one, and have found that it has matured considerably over the years. It has adapted well – giving people exactly what they want – done largely by the annual CRASHtionnaire.

If my letter has a vaguely nostalgic air, I can assure you, I am a very enthusiastic 19-year-old at the end of October (and extremely spritely for my age!)

John Parlata, Allenton, Derby

I can always lend you my walking frame, John, when it all gets too much. I think you're being a bit hard, though, on this poor, bruised industry. Over 99% for arcade/licences is a touch exaggerated, and sometimes they're very good too. It is true that hardware development has slowed of late, but on the other hand, you can't

really have a healthy peripherals and software market if the machines are changing every year. It was the very stability of Spectrum and CBM 64 sales for three or more years that has led to the quantity of software we enjoy. And there is a choice of other machines now, if you want to spend the money. Acorn's Archimedes (boring name) is a bit beyond my means (and most people's I suspect), but it's a great machine – 'course, there's only one game for it (written in BASIC too), so for a bit yet, I'd stick to the Spectrum and practise with that walking frame!

LM

A PAIN IN THE EYE

Dear Lloyd

I was interested to read Maria Lyne's letter in the October issue, asking about the eyestrain and headaches caused by using computers and VDUs. I too work with computers, though not to the extent of eight hours, maybe just two to three, but we in the Civil Service have been blessed with lots of various reports, research, bumph, and general silliness, and as a result the trade unions and management have reached 'various agreements' and made certain rules.

As a rule, staff are advised that they are only to input, etc, on VDUs for four hours a day and only one hour at a time with a 15-20 minute break away from the VDU.

Various other things have come about too, like the siting of VDUs in the office. Apparently they should not be up against walls, etc, as you have no depth of vision beyond the terminal. And, when you are inputting, look up now and then to readjust your eyes to focusing longer distances and then get back on with it!

There are also more technical things like how to sit at the terminal, a recommended distance that your eyes and arms should be from the VDU/keyboard, (this to prevent tenosynovitis, a condition where the cartilages in hands and fingers swell up and deform (or something

like that!) as long time typists/computer programmers may well be painfully aware.

And so on and so forth, and although this may be very boring stuff to a lot of micro users, I suppose it's of interest to some who work with them all day every day. It's also interesting to note that some doctors advise that pregnant women should not use VDUs.

But as you stated in your reply to Maria, there's a lot of controversy about this, and when 'experts' disagree with 'experts', well, things start to get rather boringly confusing!

Andy White, Cwmbran, Gwent

If this keeps up, we'll have everyone in CRASH Towers getting up for 15 minutes every hour, and only working half days! The notion of not siting a computer screen up against a wall is quite sensible, I would say (although the one I use is), or at least near a window you can look out of, but in truth, anyone whose work forces them to work closely to it, should expand their vision frequently, otherwise the eyes do grow tired, and you feel dizzy when you stand up and have to refocus.

I wonder whether the increase in reading (after all, before the turn of the century hardly anyone read anything) has led to worse eyesight in general? I suspect not significantly. But more people wear glasses now, you might say. True, but again, before the turn of the century, who could afford glasses? And how many opticians were there to provide them in the first place? Perhaps one day the much-publicised horrors of the VDU will also become nothing more than an interesting historical footnote.

LM

FANZINE FLOORED

Dear Lloyd

I'm writing to you in defence of T Worrall's letter about fanzines.

My name is Phil Palmer. I am 16 years old. One of my friends and I decided to write a Spectrum fanzine for local enthusiasts.

We spent ages planning and

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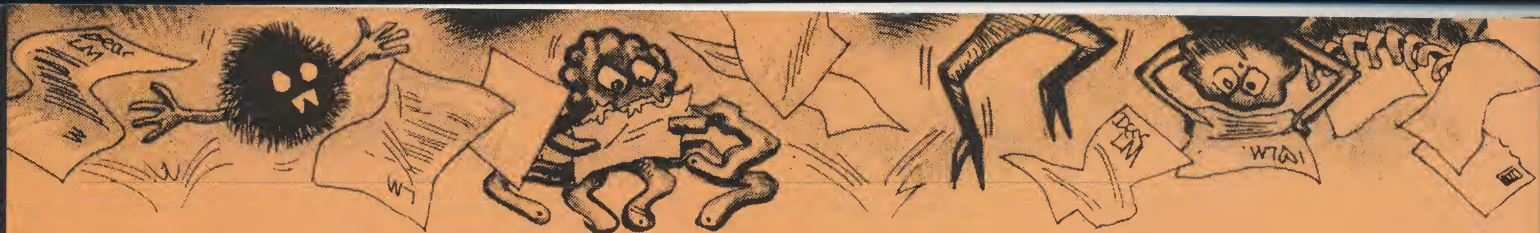
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typesetting articles for the magazine. Eventually we had an original.

The magazine was called Z80. We had thought of ways of increasing a circulation, so we sent a copy to *Your Sinclair* and also to CRASH.

It just happened that CRASH was running a Fanzine roundup or so we thought.

When CRASH appeared in our local newsagents I bought a copy. I turned to the Fanzine page where I didn't find a roundup, more a slag-up of the Fanzines that people had spend so much time to write.

Thanks to your magazine we lost a lot (well for us anyway), about £10, and our old circulation. Nobody bought even the first issue because you stated that if a fanzine had only just started then it probably wouldn't be worth the money.

Before that month's CRASH had been released, we had a circulation of about 30 people. Not much, but a damn sight better than none at all.

We also had spent money photocopying the 20 pages of the magazine and then still tried to make a slight profit for the mag to be released at only 30p.

Thanks CRASH. You've been a great help . . .

Phil Palmer, Claremont

You seem to ascribe a great power to CRASH and its Fanzine File articles. I'm sure they must have some effect on readers, but people aren't fools, and they make up their own minds as to what they wish to buy and read. I find it hard to believe that 30 individuals would all, at the same moment, decide not to buy your fanzine because of something they may have read in CRASH.

Besides which, Fanzine File isn't there just to praise and promote all fanzines. It's constructive criticism. The warning given – perfectly clearly, I think – was not that first issues are bad, it was that people shouldn't subscribe to a fanzine when it's new because many do cease publication quite soon. We have to protect the fanzines' readers' interests as well

as their editors'.
LM

MORE CHARTS

Dear Lloyd
You wanna top ten music, you gotta top ten music. Well, sort of. I've divided it into 2 top 5 charts, one for 48 and one for 128.

Speccky 48K

- 1 *Agent X* (doop ba bop!)
- 2 *Nodes Of Yesod*
- 3 *Gyroscope* (when you win)
- 4 *Trap Door* (don't you open that trap door!)
- 5 *Sweevo's World* (why not?)

Speccky 128

- 1 *Never Ending Story*
- 2 *Starglider*
- 3 *Glider Rider* (hate the game!)
- 4 *Daley Thompson's Supertest*
- 5 *Stormbringer*

If you think your Hermes is bad then you should see the effort I'm typing this on. Olivetti 1776 or summut!

Super Sid, (alias Andy Haslam), Walsall, West Midlands

Who says I think my Hermes is bad?

LM

THE ETON HACKING SONG

To the super cool person who wears a sack over his head. Or in other words,

Dear Lloyd

I just had to write, (well not strictly true), about the playing tips in your mag. They're brill. However I feel that the hackers are taken for granted. So, with no expense spared, I have composed the Hacking Song to show that we appreciate the hard work they do for all the mortals who can't be bothered to learn to hack – such as me!

'Oh sugar!' I moan,
'I've been blown to bits'.
With these wacky new games,
You really need your wits
Out of time in *Enduro*,
Kicked where it hurts in *Fist*,

And my AGAV in *Starglider*,
Received too many hits!

So I pray for the guys,
Who really know their stuff.
Who make Stallone in *Cobra*,
That extra bit tough.
Whether it's immortality or
timelessness,
Which you seek and you need,
They'll certainly make your Willy,
(as in *Jet Set*),
Anything but a weed.

To me they are heroes,
I'm sure you'll agree.
Jon North is a wiz,
So too the Hackers from Haxby.
And all the other hackers,
Too many to name.
Who beat that old programmer,
At his own game.

No speed lock's a match,
Although flashy and quick.
It may take them a while,
But soon they can lick.
Every complex system,
Ever dreamt up to load,
That garbage of waffle,
They call machine code.

Why do they do it?
It can't be for free.
Or are they the worst,
A games player can be?
But I do know without them,
Lives would be lost,
In those toughie new games,
Some not cheap at the cost!

Its a rough old world,
In which to be alive,
But at least with our heroes
We'll continue to survive!

To conclude, how about letting us see a mug shot of the hacking bunch, after all they must be about as clever as the actual programmers themselves.

Martin Harrison, Kendal, Cumbria

*Hackers from Hax,
Send us a fax,
Include your pix,
That we may fix
Upon you six . . .
Or are there five of you . . . ?
(Thank you Martin).*

LM

PROBLEMS WITH THE SAMPLER

Dear Lloyd
When I received the CRASH Sampler tape (October cover mount), I thought great idea. When I loaded it, I wasn't so sure. Surely how the game plays, the addictiveness and playability is important. On *Mean Streak*, *Driller*, *Trantor* and *Slaine*, how do you test these features as all you see is the computer controlling the action?

My biggest quibble is over *Slaine*, it shows virtually nothing, except words flashing across the screen, and some fairly impressive pictures. What is the use of viewing a new system if you can't understand what is happening? It would not have been too difficult to allow you to move around in the game a little, would it not? And it would have given the reader more of an insight upon the game.

Of the games which you can actually control, I found both *Ikari Warriors* and *Athena* good, and I'm thinking of purchasing both. I'm sure that if the player had more control of the character in the other demos, they might be more impressed, leading to more sales.

On a different tack, I would like to express my views upon the poster I received in my copy of CRASH, that is the one from the Power House. I could stand the other drawings in CRASH, even *Barbarian* etc, but this poster is totally over the top. It is truly disgusting. As soon as my mother saw it, she tore it up, such was her disgust. Please, no more posters (or drawings) like that, thank you!
Michael J Brown, Ossett, W Yorks

We had hoped all the demos would be playable, and no doubt so did the responsible software houses. However, there's many a slip twixt cup and lip, and several (after all, the tape was mastered long before the issue was finished) were unable to supply playable demos of the games intended for the Sampler. But I absolutely agree with your sentiments.

*The poster: I agree with you as well! The poster (for those who are not subscribers – we sometimes let software houses include posters with subscribers' copies) was for the game *Soft And Cuddly* from the Power House. I suggest you read Mel Croucher's piece on violence in computer games in the next issue of THE GAMES MACHINE, on sale from 19 November, which has quite a bit to say about both the game and the poster.*

LM



► Karl Cowdale caught in a rare moment of relaxation

Thank you to everyone who wrote to the CRASH Forum this month, especially the many kind letters regarding Newsfield's new publication, THE GAMES MACHINE. Sorry I couldn't fit you all in, but keep trying! But thanks also to Karl Cowdale whose arm muscles have become enormous over the past two years from hauling all those mail sacks up from the post office and sorting out the letters for me. If you have anything you want to commit to paper, send your missives to LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB, and Karl will make sure I get it safely!

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PLAYING TIPS

Nick Roberts'



Hi there ladies, gentlemen and tipsters and welcome to a brand spanking new Playing Tips - with a difference. We've had to accommodate another pigeon hole up in the mailroom because you've just been too generous with your POKEs, and Lloyd's thrust me into the hot seat without so much as a letter opener!

(Lloyd's doing so much on the CRASH History and the Christmas Special Issue - Lookbacks and so on - that there's just not time for him to manage the Playing Tips and Preview for the next few months. Mind you, he still drops into my corner every so often with the odd word of avuncular (LMLWD) advice...)

At last we have the final part of the Stormbringer solution and POKEs for Motos and Ball Crazy - AND a fantastic map of Hewson's Exolon with a few tips thrown in! I'll announce who gets this month's £30 of software at the end (yes, the prize has been increased to match Tech Tips, as well it should be), so you'll have to read all the tips to get there!

HOWDON HACKERS DUO

Those intrepid Howdon Hackers have been using up all their envelopes again sending in POKEs. This month, their two best hacking routines are for Streaker and Motos.

MOTOS

Here's an infinite-everything POKE routine that will boost the addictive qualities of Motos to kingdom come. Just type in the listing and press that little old PLAY button (with the Motos tape in, of course). And look out for the Motos Editor later on in Playing Tips...

```

10 REM (C) HOWDON HACKERS 1987
20 LET A=36:LET B=70422
30 FOR F=32000 TO 32000+35
40 READ C
50 POKE F,C
60 LET B=B-(A*C)
70 LET A=A-1
80 NEXT F
90 IF B<>0 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
  DATA":STOP
100 CLEAR 31999
110 LOAD "" SCREEN$:PRINT AT 0,0;
120 LOAD "" CODE
130 RANDOMIZE USR 32011
140 DATA 62,9,50,238,163,50,239,
  163,175,195,16,130,33,9,130,54,195,
  35,54,0,35,54,125,175,
  50,233,165,50,222,165,50,1,165,205,0,12
  8
  
```

STORMBRINGER - THE SOLUTION CONTINUES

'At last,' I hear you all cry, 'they've remembered to print the second part of the Stormbringer solution!' Well, the truth is we'd forgotten all about it till some mystery person wrote an ear-tweaking letter to remind us. This continuation has come from Lee Westwood and Ben Pugh of Chesterfield, so here goes...

After changing the Bearwolf back into a teddy bear, go left off the screen into the caves. There are five rooms. You must jump the gaps carefully when you get to the final room. Get to the left side of the screen and drop the advert under the missile. Jump onto the advert and pick up the missile. Then drop off the advert and pick it up.

Walk all the way to the castle, picking up the teleport pad and the key. Once inside the castle, walk along to the right till you come to a room with a lever in it. Pull the lever and carry on walking to the right till you get to the last screen on that level. Pick up the glow shield and jump on the blue pad and keep jumping.

Then go as far left as possible and pull the lever again. Drop down the hole in the floor, walk right past the twins and into the one-way corridor and pull the lever. Go to the end screen and drop down the hole. You should land on a stool.

Now jump up one level and pull all the levers. When you come to a room with a rat in it throw the teleport pad at him and teleport. Now carry on walking and pulling levers as you go. Drop an egg down the well to have a wish.



STREAKER

Carlin the diplomat is still running around clad only in his birthday suit, so those Howdon Hackers felt sorry for him and gave him a good old POKE here and there to cheer him up. Here is the POKE for infinite lives...

```

10 REM STREAKER
20 REM HOWDON HACKERS '87
30 CLEAR 24999
40 LOAD "" SCREEN$
50 LOAD "" CODE
60 POKE 50218,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 56000
  
```


NONTERRAQUEOUS

Now I know from experience that this one is really frustrating. As soon as you think you're getting somewhere your psyche goes down and the game returns to the title screen. But now Jamie Gosse from Southampton has come to the rescue with this cheat.

When your psyche is low just go to the right of any vertical shaft and keep pressing to the right while going up off the screen and then back down into the last screen. Your psyche will go up by five each time you change screen. But beware: if your psyche goes over 800 you will die instantly.

AMAUROTE

Anybody having trouble killing the queen in M.A.D.'s Amaurote? Well, trouble no more – Chris Moore from Billinge has come up with the solution to end your pains:

Radio base and get a Supa-bomb. Now take the bomb into the bottom right-hand corner of the district and destroy the corner of the fencing. The queen will now be dead.

And some extra tips:

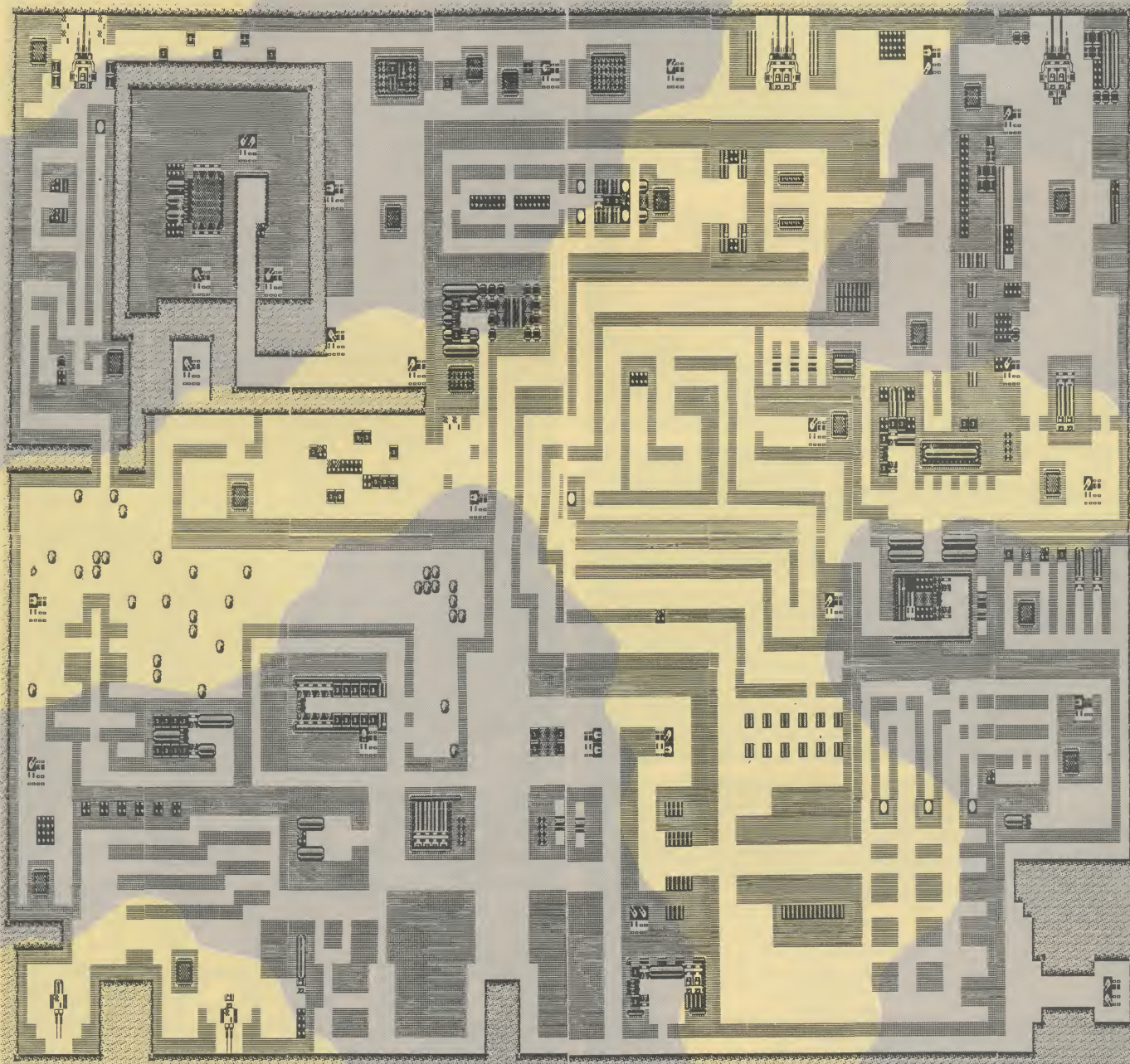
- 1 Try to get the drones to follow your Arachnus. This makes the drones easier to hit.
- 2 Run right in front of the drones

to make them follow you.

- 3 Get your Arachnus repaired when your damage is at about 85-90%.
- 4 Don't fire bombs constantly or your city damage will rise.
- 5 Start with one of the harder districts.
- 6 Only radio for rescue when you are hemmed in by the drones.
- 7 Try to explore the district before you start mopping up the drones. This will help you when you are being chased.
- 8 If you see a scout make sure you destroy it. If you don't, the scout informs the queen and she sends out more drones.

PANZADROME

Richard Burnett of Swanland, North Ferriby has been slaving away at a hot computer making a brilliant map of Ariolasoft's Panzadrome...



ELITE 128

Daniel Hunt says: when you die say 'yes' to the exit when it has finished. Now when you start a new game you will carry on in the nearest space station to where you left off.

NIGHTMARE RALLY

Brett (who didn't give his last name) says: press **SYMBOL SHIFT** and **Q** simultaneously when the game starts. The speedometer will go up to full throttle.

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST

Brett (who still hasn't given his last name) says you should add these to the high-score table: **DAS MAP** for map mode, **DAS CHT** for infinite lives, **DAS NME** wipes out enemy, **MAP OFF** deletes map mode.

COBRA

Brett (etc) says: press **M** and **N** and then **SPACE**. The game will slow down. (But this only works if there's a joystick connected.)

JON'S DIZZY POKES

```
10 REM DIZZY BY JON NORTH
20 LET imm=0:LET liv=0
30 INPUT "IMMORTAL? ";LINE A$
40 IF A$="y" THEN LET imm=211
50 INPUT "LIVES? ";LINE A$
60 IF A$="y" THEN LET liv=245
70 LOAD "" CODE
80 FOR F=23352 TO 23361
90 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
100 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
110 DATA 175,50,200,imm,50
120 DATA 25,liv,195,182,92
```

Richard Peake of Preston has sent in a highly colourful tip for Ocean's *Mutants*. On this zone map he has written which weapons to use on which levels, which is vital to completing the game.

M U T A N T S



MISSILES

BARRIERS

PHOTON TORPEDOS

TEST ZONES



LIGHTFARCE

What...? You know, in Issue 39 (April) there was a little extra for 128K owners of *Zub*: when you're playing it press 2,4,6,8 to cheat and then press 1,3,5,7 to get into the game *Lightfarce*.

Well, now 48K owners can play *Lightfarce* as well, because Darrell King of Hull has come up with this routine that allows *Lightfarce* to run alone on a 48K machine and gives you infinite energy. Just type in the short routine and play the *Zub* tape from the start.

```
10 REM LIGHTFARCE (48K)
15 REM BY D. KING
20 REM 20/6/87
25 BORDER 0:PAPER 0:INK 0:CLEAR 49151
30 LOAD "MUSIC"CODE
35 POKE 58195,0:POKE 58199,0:POKE
58200,0:POKE 58201,0
40 RANDOMIZE USR 53152
```

If you don't want to have infinite energy just delete line 35.

JON NORTH TIME

Tra, la, la... Hello, children, it's Jon North time again. ('Yippee!') This month Jon goes back to school to learn his maths formulae, and gets perplexed by Plexar, all of which makes him very Dizzy...

π^2

The baked-bean-like thingy in *Mindgames*'s π^2 needs a little **POKE** to make him do his maths right, so just **MERGE** the **BASIC** loader and type the following lines before the **RANDOMIZE USR** statement.

```
POKE 38752,0 (infinite lives)
POKE 38481,0 (infinite energy)
```

PLEXAR

Some people are finding the crystal roads of Plexar hard driving, so the Jon North AA service turns up with this routine:

```
10 REM PLEXAR POKES BY JON NORTH
20 LOAD "" CODE:POKE 37331,91
30 FOR F=23432 TO 23438
40 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
50 RANDOMIZE USR 37263
60 DATA 175,50,138,186,195
70 DATA 136,144
```


SURVIVING DEATH WISH 3

It seems that 70% of the tipsters who write to me come from Surrey. Perhaps it's the air down there, or the water? Whatever it is, it didn't stop Wayne Walker sending in these tips for Gremlin Graphics's Death Wish 3.

- 1 The first thing to do is to get your ammunition built up to full. When you start your weapons are only half-full. The shotgun takes a maximum of 20 shots, the machine gun takes 85, the rocket-launcher 30 and the Magnum 50.
- 2 Never take a weapon unless you are low on ammo. The extra ammo will only fill your current weapon to its maximum capacity.
- 3 Don't pick up a new bulletproof vest unless yours is in a bad condition. Remember where the vests are, because they're scarce.
- 4 When on the street the thugs walk faster than the grannies, so don't shoot till the thug is nearer to you than the granny is. You lose lots of points if you shoot grannies!
- 5 Never shoot policemen; not only will it put your score down, but all the policemen you meet after that will shoot you as well as the thugs.
- 6 It takes two shots to kill a gang leader; the first just breaks the table your target is sitting behind.

DIZZY AGAIN

Here are some tips from Al and Ric of Pirton for Code Masters's Dizzy. They give you the items, where to find them, and what to do with them...

GREASE GUN: in the room left of the first - drop next to cart in mineshaft
GRAVEYARD KEY: down the mineshaft - drop next to graveyard gateway
PLASTIC RAINCOAT: in the haunted chimney - carry it when walking into droplets and it destroys them for that game
GHOST BUSTER GUN: diamond mine - carry it and fall onto ghost in haunted chimney
MINER'S HARD HAT: room right of haunted chimney - destroys stalactites that fall down
PURSE OF GOLD: room right and down from the chimney - drop on bucket near the hermit's house
CLOUD'S SILVER LINE obtained by jumping on top of the hermit's house - drop in pot at start
3 IN 1 OIL: in the secret caves (to get it go down shaft, down chimney, right, right, jump on the purple thing and then jump straight up and a lift will come down for you) - drop on winch next to drawbridge
BIRDSEED: in the mineshaft - carry it and it kills all birds when hit for that game
CROWBAR: open trap door under spider at bottom of cliffs
EMERALD: top of crystal cliffs - drop on gravestone with hole underneath

CLOVE OF GARLIC: down where opened by crowbar - carry to kill bats at touch throughout the game
FLAMING TORCH: room right of start - drop next to cauldron at start
SPADE: at top of tall tree - drop in the middle of the room with hollow-sounding ground
MUSHROOM TROWEL: in hole spade made - drop on mushroom on ledge in hole spade made
BOLT CUTTERS: down hole spade made - drop at pile of chains down mineshaft and left
WIG: past bolt cutters' resultant - drop in pot
DRY ICE: crystal cliffs - freeze lake past resultant of bolt cutters
PROTECTION AMULET: past frozen lake - kill the fireballs which the wizard Zaks is going to throw at you
INSECTICIDE: graveyard - kills off any spiders that touch you in the game
DUX FEATHER: next to drawbridge - drop in pot
TROLL BREW: inside castle (WARNING: do not go in the room underneath troll brew as you can't get out without dying!) - drop in pot
EMPTY BOTTLE: in the screen with haunted forest message - drop in pot
FULL BOTTLE - resultant of lighting fire under pot and putting wig, feather, silver line and brew into it - drop next to wizard Zak in castle
AND FOR EXTRA SPRING... just jump on top of mushrooms and move left or right.

ROAD RUNNER-LOAD IN ONE!

Some smart alec called Dave Sansom has been calling me 'Nick the \$*%!*?!' because of what I said in my Issue 43 Road Runner comment - about how annoying it is having to load each level of the US Gold game separately. You see, Dave has found a way to get past all the reloading:

- 1 When asked to LOAD 01, load in the header then...
- 2 stop the tape immediately after it changes from LOAD 01 to
- 3 Wind on the tape to the beginning of the level you require, and miss off the header bit (you may have to take out the cassette lead to find it) but leave the rest of the leader.
- 4 Start the tape again and that's it. The level you chose and all those after it are loaded!

Dave does say 'sorry' for calling me a \$*%!*?! - a good job, because we were just about to send around the CRASH mafia to sort him out.

MOTOS EDITOR

Paul Wells of Sheffield has been slaving away at his Speccy to produce a fantastic editor for M.A.D.'s Motos. It allows you to edit the layout of each screen and create your own personal copy. To get a copy of this editor, you have two options: either send a tape with an SAE or a shiny new pound coin wrapped in pretty paper and details of your address to: MOTOS EDITOR, Paul Wells, 14 Whiteways Drive, Sheffield S4 8ET. And your editor will be escorted straight to you. (I don't like the sound of that - Man Ed)

A DOWN TO EARTH AUTHOR

Darren Byford from Sussex has found a great cheat on Firebird's Down To Earth - which isn't very surprising, as he wrote it! When you are alive on a screen just hold down 5, 4, 3, and 2, and while holding them down press 1 to go on to the next screen.

PERPETUAL QUARTET

C Smith, J Bean and D Austin have been busy over the last few weeks sending in enough POKES to fill Playing Tips. This Quartet routine will give you infinite power on all four players, so life will be much easier. Just type in the routine and play your Quartet tape.

```

10 REM C.SMITH J.BEAN D.AUSTIN
20 REM QUARTET POKES
30 CLEAR 65535
40 RESTORE
50 LET TOT=0:LET HAXPOC=1
60 FOR F=50000 TO 50155
70 READ A:LET TOT=TOT+HAXPOC*A
80 POKE F,A:LET HAXPOC=HAXPOC+1
90 NEXT F
100 IF TOT<>1591322 THEN PRINT AT
    9,9;INK 7;BORDER 2;FLASH 1;"ERROR
    IN DATA":BEEP 1,1;STOP
110 PRINT $1;AT 1,7;"START QUARTET
    TAPE"
120 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 62,255,55,221,33,203,92
1010 DATA 17,234,6,205,86,5,48
1020 DATA 241,243,237,94,33,124,195
1030 DATA 229,33,193,98,229,51,51
1040 DATA 17,99,252,1,42,3,33
1050 DATA 253,94,62,202,237,79,195
1060 DATA 193,98,33,150,195,229,33
1070 DATA 135,252,229,51,51,17,145
1080 DATA 252,33,145,252,1,252,2
1090 DATA 62,140,237,79,195,135,252
1100 DATA 33,145,252,17,193,138,1
1110 DATA 92,0,237,176,33,212,138
1120 DATA 34,217,138,34,221,138,33
1130 DATA 202,138,34,229,138,33,239
1140 DATA 138,34,249,138,62,195,50
1150 DATA 13,139,33,196,195,34,14
1160 DATA 139,195,193,138,49,0,0
1170 DATA 33,219,195,17,208,255,213
1180 DATA 1,28,0,237,176,62,195
1190 DATA 50,28,255,195,247,254,62
1200 DATA 201,50,240,234,50,34,235
1210 DATA 50,84,235,50,132,235,195
1220 DATA 38,255
  
```


ATHENA – ROCKS AND HARD PLACES

Lovely Athena can't cope with all that rock-bashing, so Steven Aspinwall has come to the rescue with these tips for her lovely eyes to look over.

The levels are:

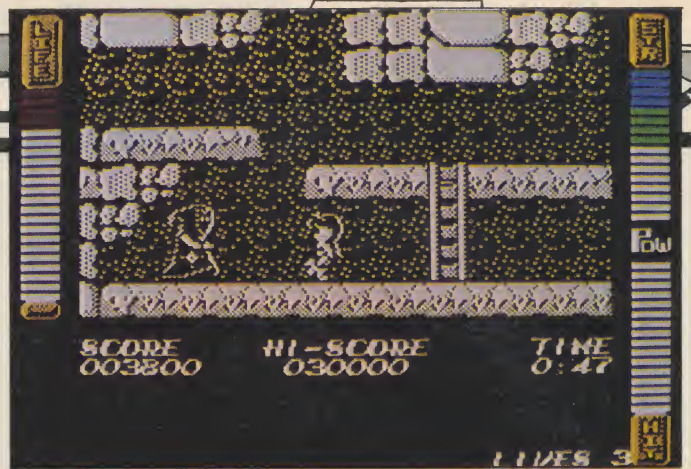
- 1 FOREST
- 2 CAVERN
- 3 SKY
- 4 LABYRINTH
- 5 SEA
- 6 HELL
- 7 THE LAST WORLD

Every now and then a **rose** will appear. Hit it with the weapon you are carrying and a heart will float quickly up the screen. Collect it and the damage that has been done to your life force will decrease by a few points.

Try to keep travelling to the **right**; that way you waste less time and have more time to look for weapons.

When you find a **yellow square** with a K in it, collect it immediately. This will ensure that when you get killed you do not lose all your weapons.

Learn to control your character properly; get used to turning Athena around so you can kill enemies attacking you from



behind.

You can collect objects that help you **jump higher** and **fly**. The **shoe** will help you jump higher and the **wings** help you fly. On the SEA level you will find some **flippers**

hanging about; these also help you fly.

Finally, the **helmet** will protect your head from rocks – which you should now be able to break by jumping at them from below.

KEY!

A = AMMO

G = GRENADES

REMOTE UNIT
= FOR ROCKET
[HOMING]

EXOSKELETON
= HOUSE

COAL
= BUNKERS

BIG
= BIG
TANK

= GUNS

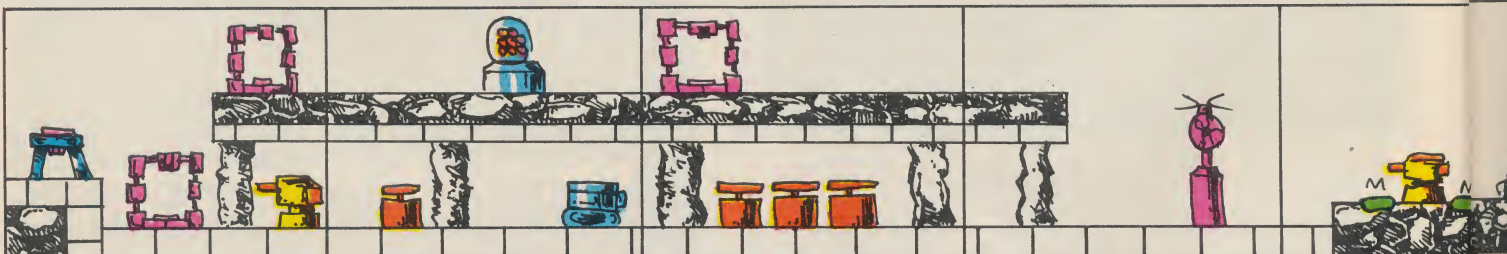
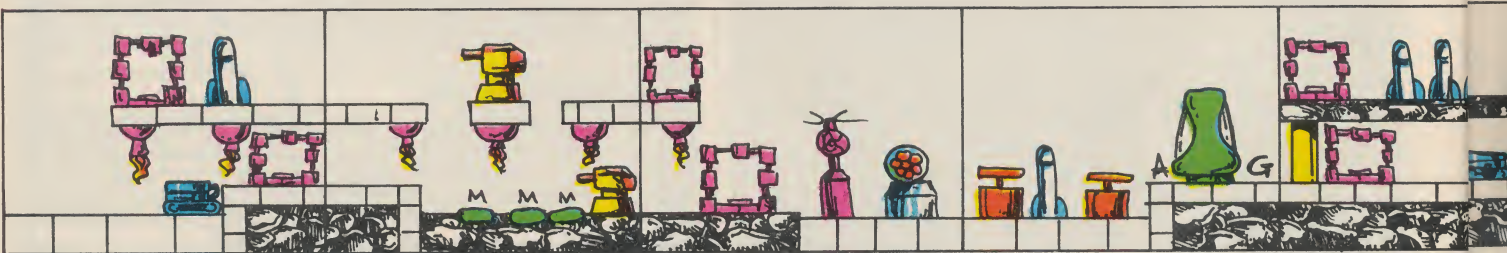
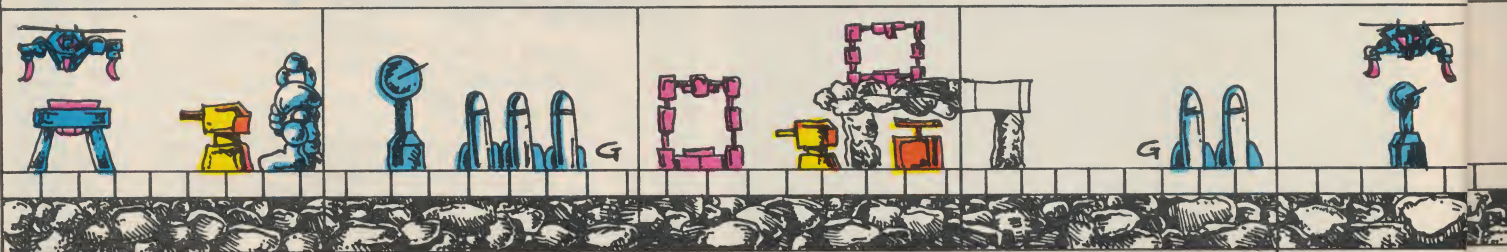
= RADAR

= MISSILE

= TELEPORT

= CRUSHERS

HOLD
= SWARMING
LITTLE
THINGS



CAIRNPOKE CASCADE

BALL CRAZY

Cairnpoke, from Country Antrim, has sent in masses of POKES this month and here's the first. You won't have to spend ages typing it in, either, because it's only one line! Just type MERGE "" and press PLAY on the tape player. When the OK sign comes onscreen type in:

37 POKE 32995,0

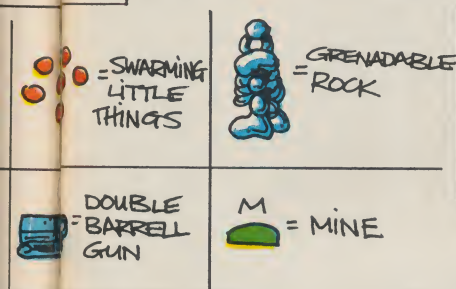
And you will have immortality . . . !

YABBA DABBA DOO

Poor old Fred Flintstone is having trouble getting a house built for Wilma and him to live in, so Cairnpoke has come to the rescue with this routine:

```
10 CLEAR 64765
20 FOR N=65000 TO 65007:READ A:POKE
  N,A:NEXT N
30 PRINT AT 10,4;"POKES BY CAIRNPOKE
  1987"
40 DATA 175,50,92,170,124,246,1,201:
  LOAD "" CODE
50 POKE 64909,195:POKE 64910,232:POKE
  64911,253
60 RANDOMIZE USR 64767
```

EXOLON



Hewson's fantastic Exolon has now earned itself a map as well as the POKES and cheat mode printed last issue. The first 24 zones have been drawn by James Mowl and Paul Birdseye of Chichester, who suitably call themselves The Mad Mappers. They've also kindly donated some weapon descriptions to go with the map, and promise me that Level Two is on its way.

HYPER-ALLOY EXOSKELETON

This is the main piece of equipment you can pick up in Exolon. With this exoframe:

- you can walk through mines.
- you are shielded from some but not all aliens.
- you no longer have to bend down or stand up to shoot the missiles from the double-barrelled missile-launcher.

BACKPACK GRENADE-LAUNCHER

Here's the best piece of equipment in the game. With it you can:

- blast any piece of machinery or rocks in your way.
- blast away at the homing missiles' control tower.
- blast away at the sealed globe that contains little pods.

HAND-HELD BLASTER

This one's quite useful for shooting things, but beware: you have only 99 shots. With the hand-held blaster you can shoot any aliens, but not machinery.

DOUBLE-BARRELLED HAND-HELD BLASTER

This comes with the Exoskeleton and is extremely useful when blasting away little aliens and shooting missiles from double-barrelled rocket-launchers. And it pulverises things much quicker than other weapons!



ACE

No, I'm not referring to the superb quality of this month's Playing Tips section (though that's hardly in doubt) – it's yet another POKE routine from Cairnpoke. (This one's been lost in the files for some time, but apparently Lloyd's granny always said 'better late than never'.)

```
10 CLEAR 26999:
20 PRINT AT 10,4;"POKES BY CAIRNPOKE
  1986": LOAD "" CODE
30 LOAD "" CODE
40 POKE 32506,0: POKE 32507,0: POKE
  32508,0: REM IMMORTAL
50 POKE 38056,24: REM INFINITE FUEL
60 RANDOMIZE USR 27000
```

A TERRIBLY SORRY PLAYING TIPS ED WRITES

Well, if my eyes don't deceive me, it looks as if more mistakes were made in Jon North's infinite-lives POKE routine for Septre Of Bagdad published in the Issue 40 Playing Tips Supplement (blessed be its memory . . .). But never fear – Kevin Russell is here with a correction. All you have to do is MERGE "" and you should get an error message. LIST the program and EDIT line 60. It should read: 60 POKE VAL "59858", VAL "0": RANDOMIZE USR 58002 RUN it again, and everything should be hunky-dory!

Well, I'm afraid that's it for another month – though I'll admit I'm sort of relieved too, because it's been a hard four weeks of opening, testing and typing your POKES and tips and deciding which ones to use out of so many valuable entries! Thanks to ex-Tipsman Lloyd for his help and the hand he lent me – a little grained, perhaps, and the nails could do with some manicuring, but it had that gardener's je ne sais quoi.

£30 worth of software goes to our CRASH Cartographers Of The Month: those Mad Mappers (James Mowl and Paul Birdseye) from Chichester for their very professional map of Hewson's Exolon.

And what I could do with now (besides a holiday – already!) is a few POKES and tips for Grange Hill, How To Be A Complete Bastard, Moonstrike, Meanstreak or, indeed, absolutely any game that takes your fancy. Each month there'll be a prize of £30 worth of software for the best tip or POKE or map (maps earn their creators the coveted title of CRASH Cartographer Of The Month). So keep on sending them to the usual address (some things never change):

NICK ROBERTS
PLAYING TIPS
CRASH
PO BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1GB



UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR IM

EL. CT R NIC ARTSTM

R IMAGINATION.

It's 7.00 in the evening. You've just finished another meal. You should do your homework but something is calling you from the garage. Something that would terrify the neighbours. Something agile, fast and deadly. **Pegasus**-the Patrol Hydrofoil Missilecraft. The temptation is just too much.



the authentic handling of NATO ally hydrofoils: US, Italian and Israeli. 76mm water cooled naval gun, Harpoon and Gabriel missiles.



8 real life missions and on-screen maps.



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Electronic Arts, 11-49 Station Rd. Langley, Slough, Berkshire, SL3 8YN England.

GET FAT
WITH CRASH
AND OCEAN! IT'S
**GAME
SET AND
MATCH**

**WIN A VIDEO RECORDER!
WIN OCEAN'S VIDEO BOARD GAME -
WINTER OLYMPICS!
WIN THE COMPLETE SPORTS COMPILATION -
GAME SET AND MATCH!**

POOR OLD porky Paul Patterson, Ocean's erstwhile Sales Manager, he is having a rough time of it. Once winner of the Manchester Cup For Kipper-Stretching now has problems lifting a pint of Old Flatulence beer to his lips (though after much practice he appeared to cope well enough at the PCW show).

But suddenly, as if a miracle had occurred, one morning he burst

into the Ocean offices saying 'Well, I played squash last night, followed by a quick boxing round, then I had a bit of basketball and rounded the evening off with a game of soccer!'

'Lorks O Lordy' thought the entire Ocean staff and they all rushed off to phone an ambulance.

But porky Paul had really been sitting in a comfy armchair wagging his joystick to *Game Set*

And Match - Ocean's fabbo new sporting compilation! And he's so enamoured of these armchair sports he's taken to Winter Olympics as well!

Winter Olympics is a new departure for Ocean because it's got nothing to do with computers at all. It's an interactive video board game. So to play it you're going to need a video recorder and that's top prize!

Winter Olympics

VCR Game

**Crash
Competition**

First prize: **VIDEO RECORDER**

Well groovy - not only can you play *Winter Olympics* with this video recorder, but you can watch films in the comfort of your own room and you need never miss an episode of *Neighbours*. In addition to the video recorder, the first prizewinner will receive copies of *Winter Olympics* and the Spectrum *Game Set And Match*.

Four second prizes: **WINTER OLYMPICS**

There are four copies of Ocean's new video board game (each worth £29.99) for runners-up. *Winter Olympics* combines action from the 1984 Winter Olympics

with the strategy of coaching your athletes to win the most medals. With official footage from ABC Sports, *Winter Olympics* puts you right in the middle of nine different events - speed skating, slalom, ski jumping, downhill, figure skating, luge, bobsled, hockey and cross-country events. You play them on the board and watch them on the video! The second prizewinners also receive a copy of *Game Set And Match* each.

ocean

To be eligible for a super sporting prize just complete two tasks.

First find all the words listed below in the grid and mark them (to make the judging easier, draw a clear line through or around the letters, as we've done for OCEAN).

Then identify the screen shot from Game Set And Match...

OCEAN	N	S	W	O	C	E	A	N	P	S
GAME	E	S	C	I	P	M	Y	L	O	I
SET	L	E	C	T	A	A	M	B	D	H
MATCH	L	S	E	T	L	G	W	M	E	S
VIDEO	O	E	C	D	I	V	I	D	E	O
WINTER	C	H	S	A	R	C	N	S	D	B
OLYMPICS	K	O	N	A	M	I	T	S	O	C
BOARD	G	A	R	E	B	S	E	A	I	W
CRASH	N	M	K	C	H	J	R	K	V	K
KONAMI	B	P	W	L	P	D	M	D	N	R

Pictured here is a screen shot from one of the games included in Game Set And Match. Tell us on the form which of the compilation's games it comes from, and which event it depicts.



NAME
ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE

THE SCREEN SHOT IS FROM
AND THE EVENT IN IT IS

Send the form and grid to: **SUPER SPORTS COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than November 25. The winners will be drawn from the correct entries randomly and the decision of CRASH's judges in all respects is final.



Ten runners-up: **GAME SET AND MATCH**

An action-oriented new compilation from Ocean combining the best of the Spectrum sports game on four tapes, *Game Set And Match* retails at £12.95 and includes: *GBA Basketball*, *Hyper Sports* with all eight events, *CDS Pool*, *Ping Pong*, *Super Soccer*, *Barry McGuigan's Boxing*, *Tennis!*, *World Series Baseball*, *Jonah Barrington's Squash* and *Daley Thompson's Supertest*. What a lot – and there's five of these compilations for runners-up.

EXPERIENCE THE REAL THING!

WIN A WINTER OLYMPIC HOLIDAY WORTH MORE THAN £2000

WINTER OLYMPIAD 88

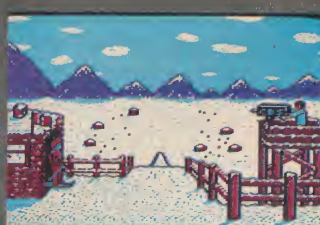


WINTER OLYMPIAD'88

Winter Olympiad'88 is undoubtedly the best winter sports simulation to date. It features the classic winter olympic events; Ski Slalom, Giant Slalom, Two man bob, Ski-Jump, Biathlon and Speed Skating. These have been depicted in a way not seen on any home computer before. The result is a phenomenally realistic and spell-binding game.

Available on the following formats:

- CBM64, BBC/ELECTRON, ATARI £9.95
- SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, C16/+4 £7.95
- DISK - BBC £14.95
- MASTER COMPACT £14.95
- ATARI 8 BIT £14.95
- ST. £19.95 • AMIGA £19.95
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INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION

Is 3-D 'just another view' or 'the only way to do it'? The third dimension in games (the fourth, actually, because time is a dimension!) can often be mere gimmickry, but 3-D masterpieces have earned some of CRASH's highest ratings ever. BEN STONE traces their history from *3D Ant Attack* to *Mercenary* and talks to the programmers; MIKE DUNN joins him to present a screen-shot gallery of the 3-D world.

Also in this section: how we did 3-D, a chance to try your own 3-D drawing – and the inside story on Incentive's *Freescape* technique, which makes its debut this autumn in *Driller*.

ONCE UPON a time, in the early Spectrum days, '3-D' prefixing a game's name (*3D Ant Attack*, *3D Lunattack*) or the infamous quote 'amazing 3-D graphics' printed on an inlay would guarantee an increase in sales of almost 30% (CRASH Mail Order estimate). Many game producers jumped onto the 3-D bandwagon with their own idea of the extra dimension, and some so-called 3-D was little more than two-dimensional graphics with extra shading or bas-relief that could create an illusion of physical depth but added nothing to the gameplay. In May 1984 Hewson Consultants, as Hewson was then known, became concerned with this pseudo-3-D software, and organised a press conference on the use of 3-D. At the gathering Steve Turner, author of Hewson's very successful *Seiddab* trilogy, gave his definition of 3-D: 'The player should, for the majority of the time, appear to be immersed in a dynamic playing

area. There should normally be some approximation to true perspective unless other sufficient strong three-dimensional cues are present.

'This definition allows two main types of game to be classified as 3-D. In the first type the player is represented by a figure on the screen but his view is from a position above and outside the playing area. 3-D effects are generated by strong visual cues in the shapes and shading of the playing area. In the second type the player is not represented on screen but instead has an *eyeball* or *cockpit* view of the playing area. He can manoeuvre within the area and the 3-D effects are generated by perspective and parallax using a vanishing point.' (This quote is taken from the feature on 3-D in CRASH Issue 6.)

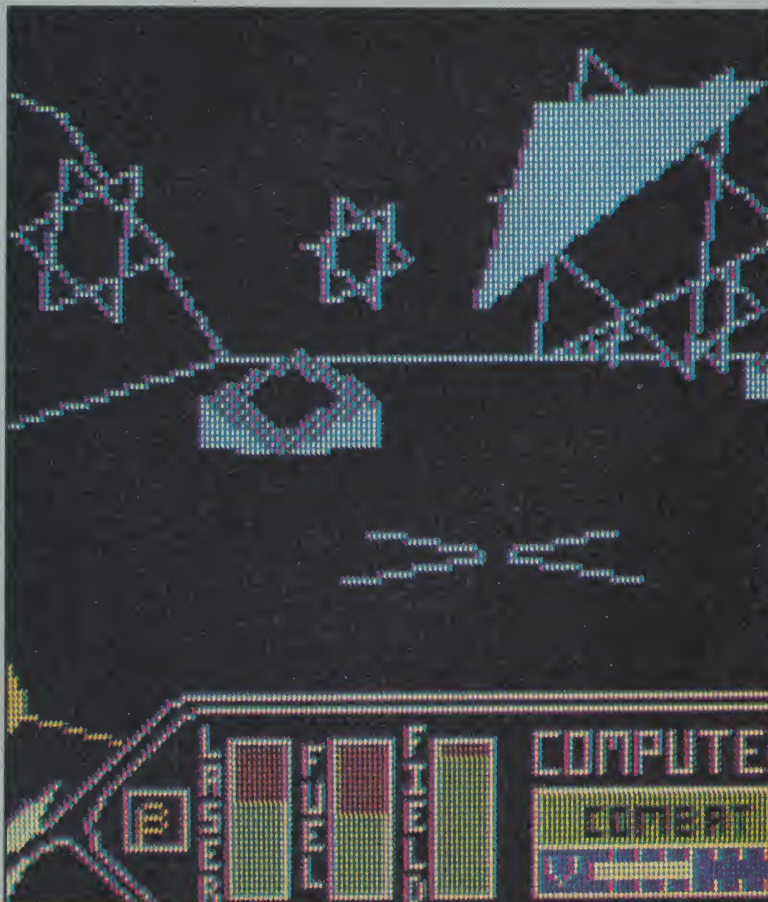
It's difficult to think of any games that differ from the two outlines above – it would be pretty hard to conceive and produce a 3-D game that didn't fall into one of Turner's categories.

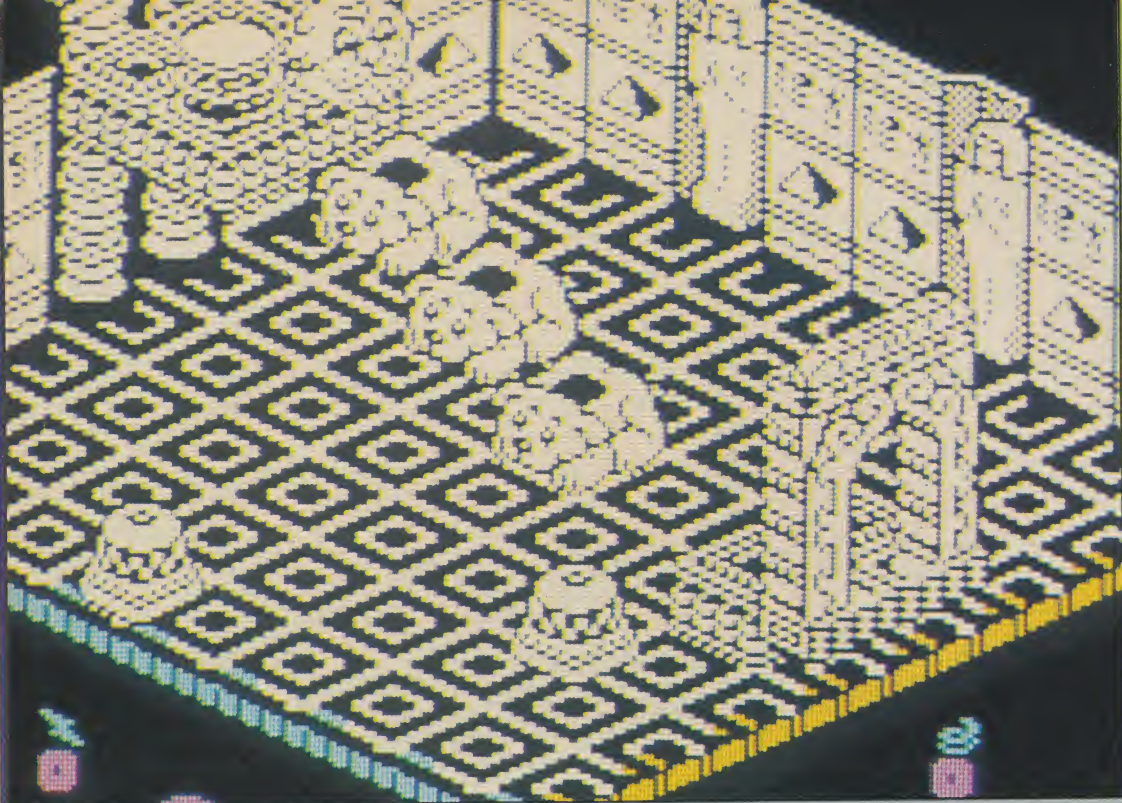
Some games, like CRL's *Room*

► A lot of people said *Starstrike II* only got such raves (it was a 96% Smash in Issue 28) because reviewers were so amazed by Realtime's 3-D technique that they hadn't taken gameplay into account. I disagree with that, but it does go to show just how stunning the scenes are. Speed is something of a problem, but the shaded vector graphics more than make up for any movement hassles. This is one of the most graphically stimulating games around. (Mike Dunn)



► After its press acclaim as probably the best game ever written for any computer, one can't really leave out Firebird's *The Sentinel* (Issue 40 Smash). It's hard to describe the feeling that the graphics impart; the excellent shading and perspective, and the way the player moves around the playing area, give a better impression of actually being than any other Spectrum game. (Ben Stone)





PRO AND CON 3-D

The best thing about 3-D games, for the CRASH reviewers at least, is the great atmosphere they create. Everything is so much more believable because it looks closer to real life.

Steve Turner again: 'The extra dimension enhances games, and if it's done well enough it creates an illusion of reality in the screen, which is something I'm into creating.'

This illusion of reality is maximised when the player has a first-person or cockpit view from the F-16 or Super-Doooper Battle Tank they're controlling. As Pete Cooke says, 'first-person perspective is the best way of doing things on 8-bit machines because you're actually *in* the game.'

Backing him up, Realtime's Ian Oliver reckons first-person perspective is so popular because the Z80 processor is very good at vector graphics, it's very fast, and speed is the main ingredient of a good shoot-'em-up. 'That's why

- Ocean's *Head Over Heels* (97% Smash Issue 39) has so much more than other forced-perspective games: amusement, real puzzles and excellent graphics. The characters are simple, effective, easily recognisable and yet still good enough to make Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond's masterpiece stand graphically head and heels over just about everything else ever. (Mike Dunn)

Ten (imagine it as wireframed Ping-Pong in a box; author Pete Cooke later did CRL's *Academy* and Nexus's *Micronaut One*) and Electric Dreams's *I, Of The Mask* (marvellously-shaded vector graphics with a character running in the centre of the screen but viewed from a cockpit) have combined the two types of 3-D to nicely disconcerting effect.

A VOYAGE ROUND 3-D

As well as two distinct types of 3-D presentation, there are two distinct types of 3-D game. You'd expect something with a cockpit view of vector graphics to be a shoot-'em-up or flight simulation (*3D Tank Duel*, *Fighter Pilot*); a forced-perspective game with the

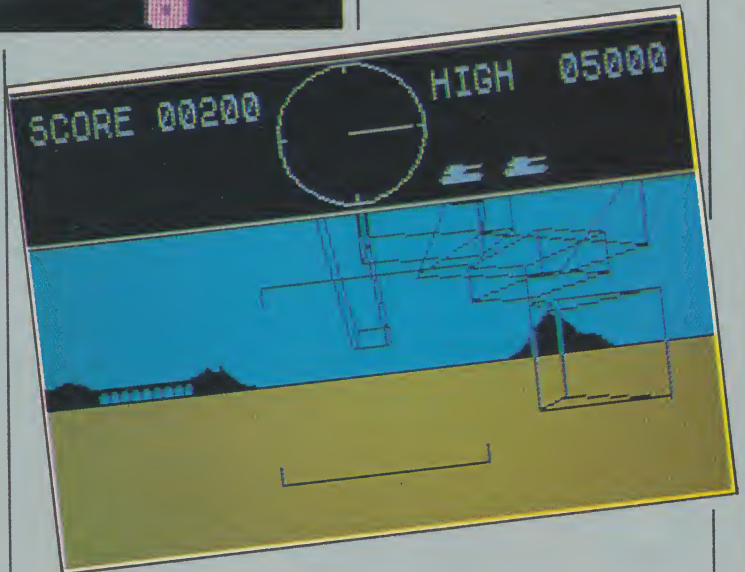
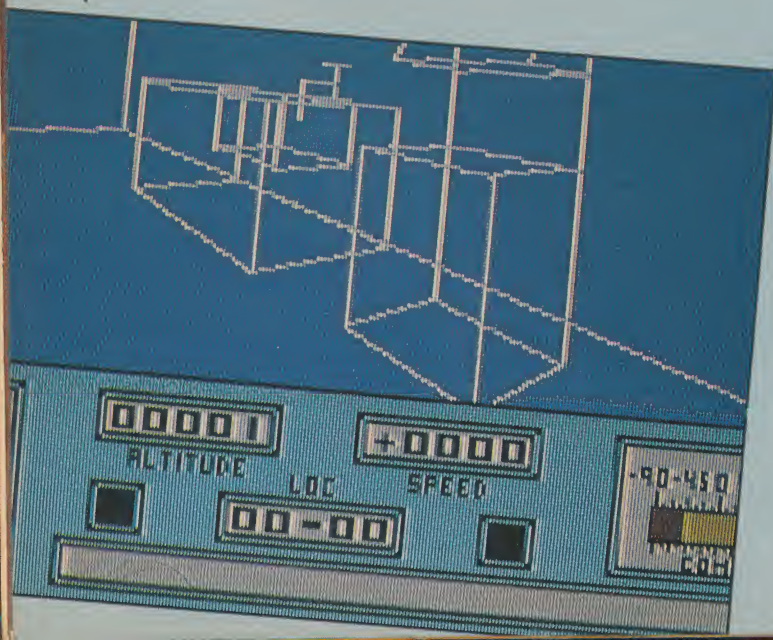
character on the screen (bird's-eye view) would probably be a puzzle-solving, collecting-objects maze type of game (*Knight Lore*, *Ant Attack*, *Nosferatu*).

There are, of course, some exceptions, like Postern's *3-D Deep Space* (written by Mike Doomdark's *Revenge* Singleton), which used a technique very similar to that used in the 3-D pages of this very CRASH.

And Steve Turner comments 'I hate the typecasting of games'; there are, after all, only a few different ways of seeing the screen so it's meaningless to liken one game to another just because they both display action the same way.

Pete Cooke says the typecasting is 'something that I've tried to avoid - there's certainly room for totally different types of games to look similar.'

- The most recent of my favourite 3-D games, Novagen's Issue 44 96% Smash *Mercenary* goes further with its graphics than any other 3-D vector game I can think of. It's fast (though some may argue that for speed it forfeits smoothness) and has some wonderful objects, from the suspension bridge to the kitchen sink! (Mike Dunn)



- A simple shoot-'em-up? No way. A huge amount of strategy can be, and often has to be, put into Realtime's *3D Tank Duel* (Issue 7 review) simply because of its 3-D complexity. (Ben Stone)

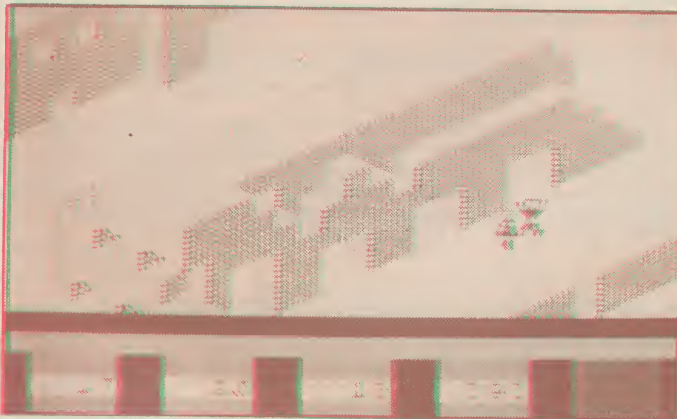


- Good vector graphics can create a fantastic effect, as in Rainbird's *Starglider* (an Issue 36 Smash with 95% and 97% for the 128 version). There's lots going on and the fast graphics add to a great, atmospheric shoot-'em-up. (Ben Stone)

And while David Lewellyn, the other half of Design Design, muses that 'it's nice to present puzzles that can only been seen in 3-D', he points out that 'you can represent any 3-D in 2-D if you try. It's just a view, you're always looking for another view.'

► Though the graphics are remarkably simple – most of the ships are just sets of parallel lines – Design Design's Issue 11 *Smash Dark Star* is very impressive, probably because of the speed with which things move. It plays well, too – I was at it almost continuously one Christmas holiday. (Mike Dunn)

16-bit machines' in the complexity of its solid 3-D world. White is a



► Quicksilver's *3D Ant Attack* (not reviewed in CRASH) was the first 3-D game to actually impress us just because of its atmospheric, state-of-the-art graphics. It's surprising that since *3D Ant Attack* only two games have used Sandy White's Softsolid technique – it gives some of the finest 3-D images ever seen on the Spectrum. (Ben Stone)



► **Imagine's Issue 26 Smash** *M.O.V.I.E.* is graphically brilliant. The programmers approached the game with real objects instead of fantastical ones, confining themselves to reasonable dimensions and recognisable but detailed shapes. (Mike Dunn)

nobody's used anything like
Freescape (see the article in this
section) before, it's not that it's
very difficult to do or anything, it's
just that no-one has thought of a
decent game plan to put around

the sluggish technique.'

But Sandy White, renowned as the first programmer to write a real isometric-perspective 3-D game (*3D Ant Attack*), insists 'Freescape has done well to compete with the

READING UP THE THIRD DIMENSION

GREENWAY FREE with Design Design's
33D Dark Star was the featured fun
package. Spectator mentions a
university textbook, Principles of
Interactive Computer Graphics, published

by McGraw-Hill) which covers the rudiments of 3D graphics Says Design Design's Graham Stafford: 'It's a boring as hell, but it explains everything that you want to know about 3D graphics.'

FREESCAPE—ALL THE SCREENS YOU CAN EAT!

THERE ARE 200,000 billion screens give or take a thousand billion, in incentive S8 software's Diller (that's 200,000,000,000,000,000 peris it 200,000,000,000,000 these days?).

There are just three spatial dimensions in *Dinler*, but it simulates movement in three, and 3D would be better than any game yet. You can go over and behind objects, crawl round the back of them, see things from any angle and discover your shoddier than the future escaped through which you've passed.

4. **Difficult** to find a lot of months
 5. **On** the sampler, introduced the
 6. **Free** and technique, which the entire
 7. **Major** development is a team as worked on
 8. for the last 44 months. The walk through
 9. filled the three dimensions of the display
 10. every detail of the address and the detail
 11. screens in the perspective. It's just like
 12. being there. It's like being there or a
 13. page stick - or preview copies the
 14. move from the front view and the
 15. jerky.

Drill the hole straight down, enough space seen in dangerous gasses building up beneath the moon's surface, so the player must locate the pockets of gas and drill holes in exactly the right places to allow the gas to diffuse.

But the real story is the technical one. 'When the Freescape idea was conceived', says Incentive's Ian Andrew, 'several programmes approached

turned down the opportunity to be involved, saying it couldn't be done. Well, it has!

The 3D world was designed in two dimensions using a customised programming utility. The three dimensions were produced by combining a parallel side and front elevations of each object.

It was fine-tuned using the **FreeScape Editor**, with which the Major Developments team can alter graphics and gameplay from within **Duke's 3D** environment.

The data is terrifically compressed, 'enabling massive environments to be available in a single load', Andrew points out.

To give the 3D effect, all visible objects are prioritized and it's decided which objects obscure others, he explains, and drawn solidly using an unorthodox filling technique he calls 'seed'.

Freeze caps probably the most advanced program yet written on 8-bit machines featuring an incredible amount of math, bonuses, and here comes the killer: a good player a month can average a half a cent a year to complete the game.

The November Spectrum release from Incentive will cost £14,995 (that price includes a novella and a 330 Mapping model) and a 660i Free appears scheduled for March 1988.

BARNABY RAGE



- Place your paper over the RED drawing, but before tracing the image with your red crayon trace the two little crosses carefully. After completing the red drawing, move the paper over to exactly centre your two red crosses over the ones provided above and below the GREEN drawing. Now trace the green drawing, and then check the result through your CRASH spectacles.

AMAZE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

THAT'S what we did. Experts told the Newsfield art department that producing 3-D illustrations and text effects would be time-consuming and very expensive – we didn't want to waste time or money, so we did it ourselves. And if you have a talent with a pencil, you can repeat our efforts and produce your very own three-dimensional drawings to be viewed through the free glasses provided with this issue.

But first things first: how does it work? Our eyes each see a slightly different version of the same view (they're separated by about two-and-a-half inches), and when combined by the brain these two images create a stereoscopic effect of depth. Try closing one eye and then seeing how good you are at judging distances . . . the world through one eye is two-dimensional.

To recreate a stereoscopic image from a flat surface – in other words, to make two dimensions look like three – we have to cheat. The single drawing must be cut up to create subtly different versions for each eye. The glasses are used to filter the light so each eye sees only one of the two versions, simulating the way your eyes see the real world.

But there's no real need to cut up both versions. If you take an illustration and call it the left-eye image (which will be printed in red), then the right-eye image (printed in green) is the one to treat specially, cutting up the various planes of depth (foreground, middle distance, background etc) by sliding them sideways to the left and right.

First decide how many depth planes you want in the picture. At the midrange point, both red and green images are exactly superimposed. Anything in the foreground requires the green image to be cut and displaced to the right – the 'nearer' it should appear, the further right it must be moved. Objects in the background require the green image to be similarly displaced to the left.

As you displace segments of the drawing, of course, you cover up bits and reveal gaps. Covering something up presents no problem, but the gaps have to be carefully redrawn – otherwise they'd show up in the finished illustration.

In a 3-D magazine like this CRASH, the two 'altered' drawings are then planned in with the rest of the page elements – text can be treated the same way – and printed with specially designed red and green inks.

The idea is simple; the spectacles' coloured foils match the inks. Hold the green lens over the page and the green ink is invisible, so the right eye sees only the red image, and it sees it as black. Similarly, the left eye sees only the green image. The brain unscrambles the two distinct images and interprets the result as three-dimensional. Clever, huh?

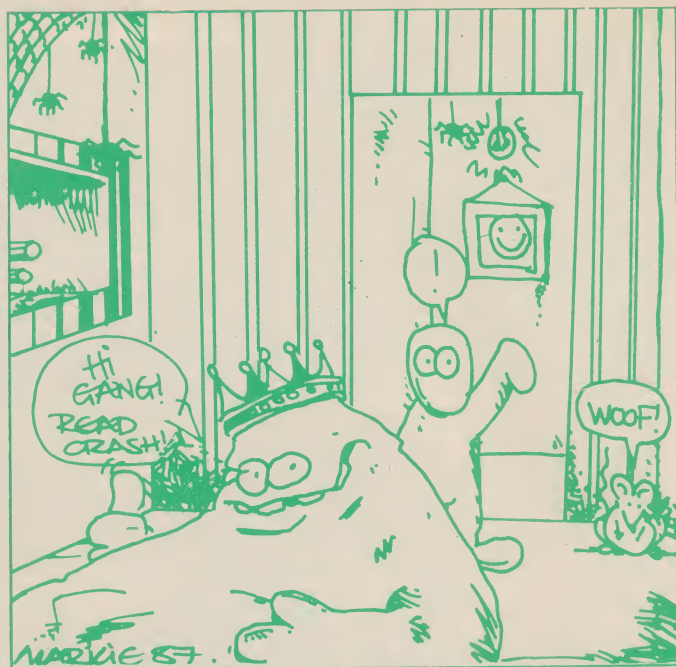
DIY3D

You can use these 3-D spectacles with your own drawings. Here's how.

You need to find green and red crayons whose colours match those of the lenses as nearly as possible. Check each crayon's colour matches by scribbling with it and then holding the lens of the same colour over the scribble. If the crayon marks vanish, that's great, and if there's only a faint shadow visible you're still in with a chance!

Now take the red crayon, lay a thin piece of paper over the RED diagram on this page and trace the lines. Then take the green crayon, move the paper over to the GREEN diagram and trace those lines. Look at the result through the spectacles and – hey presto! A 3-D picture!

Having grasped the principles by which this works, you can start creating your own 3-D images with these two crayons, perhaps at first by copying some of the 3-D illustrations in this CRASH. (When you feel you're good enough, how about entering a little CRASH 3-D comp, details right?)



3D PHOTOS

Photographs can also be treated in 3-D, but unlike a drawing, which is falsely given depth, a photograph must be stereoscopic to begin with. A stereoscopic still life is easily done with any camera, as our example here proves. Set up the objects on a table, and lay down a strip of tape along which the camera back can slide, with two marks two-and-a-half inches apart.

Make a mark on the camera back, and line it up with the left-hand mark on the tape. Now photograph the still life, wind the film on, move the camera to the right-hand mark on the tape and photograph again. These two pictures are the left- and right-eye images respectively.

Of course, in the example on this page we've superimposed the two photos and printed them in red (for the left-eye view) and green (for the right-eye view), but there is a painful technique for seeing your own prints in stereo. REVERSE the left and right images side by side – ie put the left-eye to the right of the right-eye! – stare at them, cross your eyes and superimpose the central image your brain sees. It'll be in 3-D. This takes practice – and don't do it if the wind's about to change direction!

ROGER KEAN

- A simple stereoscopic 3-D photograph of a still life set up by Cameron Pound



3-DIY COMPETITION

HERBIES a little extra fun competition for anyone having mastered the technique of producing 3-D images with a green and red crayon send us a 3-D illustration. Drawings should be on a larger than A4 size (210mm x 297mm) and they can be of any subject you like. We don't even mind if you copy them from CRASH, but they MUST NOT be copied from any of the 3-D illustrations in this issue – that would be cheating!

The three best 3-D effect drawings as judged by Barry Page, Roger Kean, OD Frey and 3-D wizard Markie Kendrick will each earn their sender a CRASH subscription (or a year's extension of an existing sub) and a CRASH shirt of the artist's choice (state type & they're in this issue's hypermarket and sized medium XXXL).

The very best of the three will also earn its sender the top prize of 300 Stubby colour pens.

Get your drawings in by December 10. Dates Don't forget to note your name, address and shirt type and size (of the sample piece of paper as the artwork if possible) and don't worry about the spectacles – we've got plenty of those to judge the drawings!

The address is: 3-DIYCOMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, Luddlow, Shropshire SY8 8BB.

ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME



JETMAN

LOOK OUT, GORDON.
BEHIND YOU!!

HAH!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME
WITH AN OL' TRICK
LIKE THAT???

ABE!

LOOK OUT!

BEHIND YOU,
GORDON!

SWAH

DUCK!

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REMEMBER HOW OUR HERO THOUGHT HE WAS
KING OF THE PLURPS, BUT HE WASN'T, AND HOW
HE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO CRASH ON THE
PLANET, AN' HE DID, AN' HOW CASTAWAY FLASH
GORDON WAS GOIN' TO HAVE HIM FOR CRASHIN'
ON A DOUBLE YELLOW LINE, AN' STILL IS, AND
HOW JETMAN TRIED TO FOOL HIM...? REE DON...

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the CRASH CHARTS

TOP GAMES NOVEMBER

The three charts compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games – it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the results pages and in FRONTLINE to make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw 15 winners from all the voting forms received – five for the HOTLINE, five for the ADVENTURE and five for the STRATEGY chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a shirt goes to the ADVENTURE and £20 of goodies and a shirt goes to the STRATEGY

Four runners up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the **CRASH HOTLINE CHART**, **CRASH ADVENTURE CHART** and **CRASH STRATEGY CHART**: PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

Those *Desert Rats* crawl fast, but the ship isn't sinking – *Vulcan* and *Rebelstar Raiders* are STILL at the top, where they started. PSS and CCS all but monopolise the chart, showing how software houses still consider strategy a specialist interest, and perhaps not a lucrative one. Are they right?

From Newport in south Wales come 105,374 people (1981 figures), but from Shipley in West Yorkshire comes CRASH's strategy-form-filler-out of the month, Robert Newall. The runners-up: Robert Brand of Slough in Berkshire, S Hornblow of Basingstoke in Hampshire, Martin Greenwell of Earl Shilton in Leicestershire, Andrew Green of Walsall in Staffordshire and Robert Keeling of Sandbach in Cheshire. He won't need all those protective Sandbachs now he's got a CRASH cap and T-shirt...

Paper Boy is back on his round, edging up toward the Number Two spot he occupied a couple of months ago. *Elite* clearly isn't any more, and *Match Day* seems to have met its match too. But *Exolon* flies in to glory like the intergalactic cavalry, entering the chart at Number Five.

This month's big prize goes to Bob Ford of Durrington near Salisbury – who listed *Firebird's* *Druid* and *Gremlin's* *Way Of The Tiger* among his favourites as well as *Gauntlet* et al. Still, we won't hold that against him... Runners-up are Gregory Wye of Bidford-On-Avon in Warwickshire, Barry Smith of Ipswich in Suffolk, Michael Jarrett of Feltham in Middlesex (any relation of ZZAP!'s Steve? Let's hope not, for Middlesex's sake...) and Ravi Deaper of Okehampton in Devon.

Strategy Top Ten

1 (1)	VULCAN	CCS
2 (2)	REBELSTAR RAIDERS	FIREBIRD
3 (3)	ARNHEM	CCS
4 (10)	DESERT RATS	CCS
5 (4)	THEATRE EUROPE	PSS
6 (-)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
7 (-)	YANKEE	CCS
8 (6)	TOBRUK	PSS
9 (-)	BISMARCK	PSS
10 (7)	BATTLE OF BRITAIN	PSS



Hotline Top 20

1 (1)	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
2 (3)	ENDURO RACER	ACTIVISION
3 (2)	HEAD OVER HEELS	OCEAN
4 (8)	PAPER BOY	ELITE
5 (►)	EXOLON	HEWSON
6 (17)	ZYNAPS	HEWSON
7 (10)	COBRA	OCEAN
8 (4)	URIDIUM	HEWSON
9 (11)	ARKANOID	IMAGINE
10 (-)	LEADERBOARD	US GOLD
11 (9)	BARBARIAN	PALACE
12 (5)	ELITE	FIREBIRD
13 (-)	QUAZATRON	HEWSON
14 (6)	MATCH DAY	OCEAN
15 (14)	STAR GLIDER	RAINBIRD
16 (7)	BOMB JACK	ELITE
17 (18)	BATMAN	OCEAN
18 (-)	LIGHTFORCE	FTL
19 (-)	COMMANDO	ELITE
20 (-)	MICRONAUT ONE	NEXUS

Stormbringer must be breaking some kind of record with its ten-place ascent – and it scored 9% of ALL votes this month! No other significant changes, but three ►s: *The Big Sleaze*, *The Pawn* and *Killed Until Dead*, all Smashes in the last six months. Melbourne House has a healthy quarter of all charted games.

The archadventurer winning this month's software prize is Gavin Horne of Maidenhead in Berkshire; runners-up are Wayne Styles of Bolton in Manchester, Neil Archer of Wolverhampton (on a clear day he can see Shropshire, if not Ludlow), Alistair Gentry of Felixstowe in Suffolk, and James Hardy of Falkirk in Scotland's Central region.

Adventure Top 20

1 (1)	THE HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2 (12)	STORMBRINGER	M.A.D.
3 (3)	SPELLBOUND	M.A.D.
4 (2)	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE GAMES
5 (4)	KNIGHT TYME	M.A.D.
6 (9)	LORD OF THE RINGS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7 (7)	THE BOGGIT	CRL
8 (5)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
9 (10)	THE PRICE OF MAGICK	LEVEL 9
10 (18)	FAIRLIGHT 2	THE EDGE
11 (11)	GREMLINS	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
12 (19)	DRACULA	CRL
13 (6)	DOOMDARK'S REVENGE	BEYOND
14 (14)	RED MOON	LEVEL 9
15 (►)	THE BIG SLEAZE	PIRANHA
16 (-)	SHERLOCK	MELBOURNE HOUSE
17 (-)	SHADOWS OF MORDOR	MELBOURNE HSE
18 (►)	THE PAWN	RAINBIRD
19 (-)	HAMPSTEAD	MELBOURNE HOUSE
20 (►)	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD

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PBM MAILBOXX



Welcome to the first 3-D Mailbox – well, some of it's 3-D. Regular readers of

the column may (or may not!) be surprised to learn that I have had yet another bump in my car. This time the back end has been smashed in – by a (so-called) friend!

Meanwhile, on the PBM front methinks I have just died in *Megalomania*. Roll on Game Three . . .

NEW GAMES

CIVILISATION AT LAST

CIVILISATIONS is run from London by its designer, Anthony White, who has created an interstellar economy within his Amstrad computer. A new player starts the game with a set amount of the stellar currency and a means of transport (which incurs running expenses . . .) to go from one planet to another.

You create a game character for yourself and further your character's aims using the available worlds and their own economies. Basically, you must remain both financially solvent and alive (there's no sense in being rich if you're going to get killed!)

The game is run in an open-ended fashion with turns made as often as possible.

An interesting feature of *Civilisations* is the use of the legal system. Do anything wrong in this game and you end up being tried for your crime – by a selection of your fellow players!

For more information, write to Anthony White at 11 Shrewsbury Road, New Southgate, London N11 2LL. Further developments will be awaited with interest.

DUBIOUS OVERTONES

IN DUBIOUS BATTLE is the first product of Pandem Games, based in Northern Ireland. It's another of the unusual games launched recently, because instead of having one game environment, *In Dubious Battle* has two: The World (consisting at the start of the game of about 500 countries, with 100 nations of primitive tribes, nomads and farmers) and Elysium, a world of the gods inhabited by deities and deityesses. The player is one of these deities, albeit a fairly minor one at first – the object of the game is to become what the rulebook terms the 'Allfather' of the gods. This happens when at least 75% of the other gods (players or not) become subservient to you. It's not an easy task.

The two environments interact as the players go about their godly duties. They must gain power by

making The World's mortals worship them, give them the odd sacrifice etc. The more worshippers you have, the more powerful your god is. Here the game becomes a little like the real world.

Different gods represent different aspects of life (there are gods of war, peace, love, fruit machines etc) and thus followers of one may well dislike worshippers of another. This may cause nations supporting you to battle with the supporters of another god – but war can reduce your godly power, so take care who you convert!

Battles are possible in Elysium itself. Gods can recruit demons and other lesser immortals to do dirty deeds to other players, such as knocking them out of the game. But take care as you grow in power within your own world; they certainly aren't all angels up there!

In Dubious Battle has an interesting concept, and a glance at the excellent rulebook reveals that there's more to it than first meets the eye. I'd recommend you read the book thoroughly before deciding whether or not to play; it can be bought for £1.50 from Pandem Games at PO Box 127, Belfast 9, Northern Ireland.

WAS THERE LIFE BEFORE PANGEA?

PANGEA is a hand-moderated fantasy role-playing game launched by the Surrey based Anvil Games in July. The authors have created a mystical world for your game character's adventures, and the marvellous rulebook is full of history: stories of ancient heroes, the wars they fought, the races they encountered, the deities they bumped into, but rarely the diseases they caught.

It's not only stories, though – there's a fascinating *Who's Who?* of the nine gods, plus eleven pages about the races of *Pangea*. Their habits, descriptions, localities, physical stature, virility, it's nearly all there! Besides the races there are character classes such as assassins, priests, rangers, rogues, warriors and warlocks; other features include guilds, various types of magic, methods of combat and so on.

You must design your character and set yourself a quest; there's a character-creation folder which could take the best part of a weekend to complete! If you enjoy FRP games then take a look at *Pangea*. It's very well-presented and the startup package has a lot to offer. Send an SAE for details to Anvil Games, *The Old Fire Station, Queen Street, Godalming, Surrey GU7 8D*.

NEW ORDERS FOR SCI-FI FANS

NEW ORDER could well prove to be THE game for sci-fi buffs, though without perseverance it could also prove to be the most irritating game for sci-fi buffs. *New Order* was designed in America and has been brought over the Atlantic under franchise to Jade Games. Like so many other games of its ilk, *New Order* puts you in charge of a planet-bound civilisation which discover hyperspace technology. Which race will dominate the space in which you live – your own, or an alien one? Here we go again . . . The answer is 'neither one nor the other' – only war will dominate such a situation.

I think the designers KNOW they have a goody here – the best features are listed on the front of the rulebook. They include: a 3-D playing area with 9,000 sectors; 200 star systems and 700 planets per game; detailed UFO, combat, colony, trade and atomics messages to survey alien activity around you; updated reports on all your forces on each turn; a complex combat-system design which lets you play about with both offence and defence; and an accurate damage indicator, detailing exactly what percentage of your ship has been destroyed.

Technological research is available to improve your game advantage in whatever field you choose, and five classes of starship are at your disposal in this game where trading and diplomacy take a crucial role. The object is to command your civilisation's economy, defence, social trends and alliances and thus become the most powerful ruler in the game.

New Order could be a viable alternative to sitting on the *StarGlobe* waiting list. Unlike games such as *Shattered World*, *New Order* is far from empty – I found the 68-page rulebook an



interesting and involving read.

It's computer-moderated and uses the deadline system (ten, 15 or 20 days). There's a lot to do each turn (the orders form is divided into 18 sections!), though at £2.50 a turn you certainly pay for it.

New Order will take a lot of playing to get right. It's good value for money, if you've got the time. Still interested? The rulebook costs £2.50 from Jade Games, PO Box 54, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0NA.

WIN A CASTLE!

MANY READERS have suggested PBM Mailbox launch its own game. And here's what I've come up with...

In conjunction with Jade Games, two special games of *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* will be run exclusively for CRASH. The player with the highest score at the end of 25 turns wins a superb prize – a special-edition hand-built stone castle! No, I'm not joking. But I feel I should make it clear that this castle will only be about ten cubic feet big. The castle is a display piece,

the sort of thing wargamers place on a sideboard in the sitting room for decoration.

The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon is a relatively low-priced game: startup is free and each turn costs only 70p. It has been designed for 100 players with a ten-day deadline/turnaround, and Jade claims you needn't even read the rulebook to play!

The theme of this game is (according to the accompanying booklet) 'diplomacy, skill and strategy'. You play a knight of Avalon, the legendary land of King

Arthur, and you must use your supporting armies and religion (plus a hint of diplomatic skill) to explore Avalon, meet its people, and conquer its provinces.

As you grow in strength and fame your character builds up game points. After the first three rounds the player (or players) with the highest score in each round will have one free turn credited to their game account.

After 25 turns all the scores will be compared. If there is an outright winner, he or she will have the castle – their very own Camelot! If not, then the game will continue till one person holds the highest score.

Remember that *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* was

designed to last for at least 50 turns. Once 25 turns are over (in approximately a year) the game will continue as a normal game, so hang in there!

For more information and your free startup pack, cut out the voucher printed here and post it to *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon*, CRASH Competition Game, Jade Games, PO Box 54, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0NA. Please note that Jade Games and not CRASH is running the competition and games!

Progress in the two games will be followed closely in PBM Mailbox, with a list of the top ten players printed each month.

► This map shows Avalon, which can be divided into 50,400 squares. You can clearly see the 504 provinces, each being 50 miles square... it's quite an area to control, let alone attempt to conquer! Up-to-date maps of your provinces are shown on the turnsheet, followed by inventories of what's in the area. Don't forget that though there will be about 100 players in the game, everyone starts with only one province. This leaves 404 spare provinces to compete for... good luck!



This voucher entitles you to enter a special CRASH competition game of *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* run by Jade Games. You may only use ONE of these vouchers.

The games begin in the week commencing December 7 1987 – if your entry is received by Jade Games later than this date you WILL NOT be eligible for the CRASH competition games.

Startup is free, but further turns will be charged for at the rate of 70p each or any other rate which may be set by Jade Games.

The competition and games are being run by Jade Games and are entirely their responsibility. CRASH will under no circumstances accept

any responsibility for any aspect of the competition and games and all correspondence concerning them should be sent to Jade Games.

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LUDLOW DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY

SHROPSHIRE

DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY has been running for some time now, and seems to be a popular part of PBM MAILBOX

*001 Adrian Neal

48 Marketstead Estate, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1SL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 & 78; Capitol 15; Earthwood 52; Arcadia 6; Star Empires 1; Conquest*

*002 Jason French

78 Princes Road, Ellacombe, Torquay TQ1 1PA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander BLITAD)*

*003 Travis Smith

27 Sharnon Crescent, Braunstone Frith, Leicester LE3 6NW
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Belle Julie)*

*004 Robert Darbyshire

22 Thornton Gate, Clevellys, Lancs, FY5 1JN
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 1 (Death Warriors); It's A Crime! 4 (Megacity Blues)*

*005 Stuart Millinship

17 Graveney Gardens, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6QW
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander SHUTUN)*

*006 Mr G G Manganoni

109 Kings Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3UE
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Crasimoff's World; Explorers of Orion; Lands of the Crimson Sun; Aes; Mark of Chaos; Untamed Land; Vesuvian*

*007 Mr C J McCarthy

39A Seaview Road, Liscard, Wallesey, Merseyside L45 4QN
GAMES: *Starglobe 1; Star Empires 1; Vorcon Wars 19; Saturnalia; Fleet Manoeuvres P107*

*008 Scott Macfarlane

2 Broomside Terrace, Costorphine, Edinburgh EH12 7LZ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60; Super Vorcon Wars 77*

*009 Paul Davidson

51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Commander PEPISH); Arcadia; Conquest*

*010 Kev Wasey

9 Clarkson House, Maysoule Road, Battersea, London SW11 2BP
GAMES: *Earthwood 30*

*011 Ian Hudson

53 Deepmore Close, Alrewas, Nr Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 65 (Commander PESTIB); Super Vorcon Wars 77 (Commander FRUGAD); World of Vengeance (Ian's Invincibles nr Bury St Edmunds)*

*012 Gareth Evans

4 Whitelands Road, Thatcham, Newbury, Berkshire RG13 4AR
GAMES: *Arcadia 6 (Egg Groinside)*

*013 Mike Adams

774 Holmefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside LK9 3PQ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars; Conquest; It's A Crime! 4 (Priests)*

*014 David Lane

23 Florence Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham N92 5HR
GAMES: *Casus Belli 5; Player 16*

*015 Martin Higgins

Wallesey Road, Wallesey, Merseyside L44 2AG
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72; It's A Crime! 4*

*016 Cliff Frost

175 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 3FN
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Arcadia; Earthwood 44; Kings of Steel 17; Arcadia; It's A Crime!; Swords and Shields*

*017 Robin van den Yssel

Smaragdlaan 172, 2332 BX Leideh, Zuid Holland, Netherlands
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 (Commander TREBIN); Starglobe 3 (The Dutchman)*

*018 P Brunstan

Cae Mari Pwn House, Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 2 (Death)*

*019 Steve Vickers

26 Swinton Court, Harrogate HG2 0BB
GAMES: *Soccer Star; Saturnalia; It's A Crime! 4; World of Chaos*

*020 Barnaby Dellar

11 Priory Grove, Stockwell, London SW8 2PD
GAMES: *Starglobe 4*

*021 Stephen Holt

27 Rosemary Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8ER
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 61 (Commander BRIDER); It's A Crime! 4 (Fighting Uruk-Hai)*

*022 Kevin Pack

Walnut Tree Lodge, 9 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire NN9 8JE
GAMES: *Earthwood; Saturnalia; Starglobe 4; Orion's Finger; It's A Crime! 3; Casus Belli; Aes*

*023 Matthew Hanson

10 Denby Lane Crescent, Grange Moor, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4EB
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Obsidian Fox); Arcadia*

*024 Gavin Marshall

36 Spur Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0QL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 71*

*025 Owen Whitehead

213 Park Road, Barnsley, S70 1QW
GAMES: *Aes ('Rillion' - E Side), Saturnalia (Grendl of the Web), Enchirodon (Brothers in Arms), It's A Crime (Brothers in Arms), From The Mouth of Hell (Elf), World of Chaos (Rillion Kerr), Soccer Star (Morning Star RS League)*

*026 Damian Manning

12 Warden Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5SB
GAMES: *Starglobe (SS Alvon), It's A Crime (Merry Mob)*

*027 John Preen

12 Underdale Avenue, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 5DY
GAMES: *Starglobe Four (SS Broadsword of the Guild Alliance), Vorcon Wars 78 (Plonog)*

*028 John Kemp

9 Wold View, Caistor, Lincoln, LN7 6UU
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (New York Assassins), Arcadia 8 (Lord Centaurus at Jihad City, P27)*

*029 Milan Petronic

24 Dell Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 2HZ
GAME: *Arcadia 13 (Draug Dur)*

*030 JC Fowler

11 Beaconsfield Place, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0SZ
GAMES: *Starglobe Three, Arcadia 8*

*031 Kevin Edwards

52 Woodlands Road, Irchester, Northants NN9 7BU
GAMES: *Vorcon 60, It's A Crime! 4, City of Strife*

*032 Jason Cottrell

17 Back Lane, Barrington, Cambs, CB2 5RF
GAMES: *Saturnalia (Axil Taranus), Tyranny (PS)*

*033 Michael R Stannard

44 Harrington Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7AZ
GAMES: *Arcadia 10 (Mordran the Unknown at Seven Springs City)*

*034 Malcolm Sums

76 Mount Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YF
GAMES: *Soccer Star (Kilmore Oilers), Bradley's Football (Houston Oilers)*

*035 Paul Davidson

51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Pepish), Arcadia 7 (Ped at Moriquendi City), Conquest (Anar Narion, maps 18/19)*

*036 S Davies

16 Clara Street, Ton-Pentre, Rhondda, Mid Glam, S. Wales, CF41 7HQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (gang 315), Vorcon Wars 64 (Chotub)*

*037 S Wyatt

60 St Andrews Road, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9JJ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 73 (Prifun), Vorcon Wars 78 (Sathal), It's A Crime! 4 (Mercenaries), Kings of Steel (Woodland Alliance)*

*038 Richard Goff

20 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU
GAME: *Arcadia 12 (player 17)*

*039 Jason Huggins

35 Garratts Lane, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 2ED
GAME: *Saturnalia (Vetrex)*

*040 Dean Stuart

26 Ullswater Avenue, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 9LR
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 69 (THOPAL); Vorcon Wars 85 (TRIBER); Conquest; It's A Crime! 7 (Gang 267); St Valentine's Day Massacre*

*041 Gary Rooksby

42 Spinney Road, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire NG12 5LN
GAME: *It's A Crime! (Scorpions, Gang 497 in Game 8)*

*042 Andrew Middleton

3 Derwent Road, North Shields, Tyne And Wear NE30 3AH
GAMES: *It's A Crime!; Shattered World*

*043 David Patrick

18 Geoffreyson Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire RG4 7HS
GAMES: *Casus Belli 35 (Player 9); It's A Crime! 8 (Mutant Warriors); The Hunting*

*044 David Norman

7 King's Lane, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside L63 8NN
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 76 and 88; Kings of Steel 17*

*045 The Dark Young (one)

(sic)
59 Thornton Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7XL
GAME: *Super Vorcon Wars 96 (Commander CRONVO)*

*046 Gareth Williams

17 Western Avenue, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4XR
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (Perrigrines); Super Soccer (AC); Crasimoff's World (Death Squad)*

*047 Andi Watson

8 Earlswood Crescent, Kippax, near Leeds, West Yorkshire LS25 7JQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 9; Further Into Fantasy (Thai); Saturnalia*

*048 C Houghton

12 Tedder Road, Beaconside, Stafford ST16 3RA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 83 (VARMER); Super Vorcon Wars 87 (GASTUG); Crasimoff's World; AE's (Western)*

*049 Patrick Walsh

36 Verney Road, Longley, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8NX
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 7 (Lynchmob); Soccer Star (Longley FC); Football League (Spurs)*

*050 David Brimley

41 Silverthorn Gardens, Chingford, London E4 8BW
GAME: *It's A Crime! 4 (The Unnameable)*

*051 Hugo Allen

38 Bathwick Hill, Bath, Avon BA2 6LD
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 66 (THOGET); Vorcon Wars 75 (TRALIC); It's A Crime! 7 (Hill Street Scum)*

*052 Carver Tedstone

48 The Walk, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan CF47 8RR
GAMES: *Kings Of Steel 19 (KIR); Kingdom Of Orion 2 (Orissa); Casus Belli 38 (Player 15)*

*053 Neil Moulding

46 Park Avenue, Allerton Bywater, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 2AS
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 7 (Death Angels); Striker (Castleford Cosmos)*

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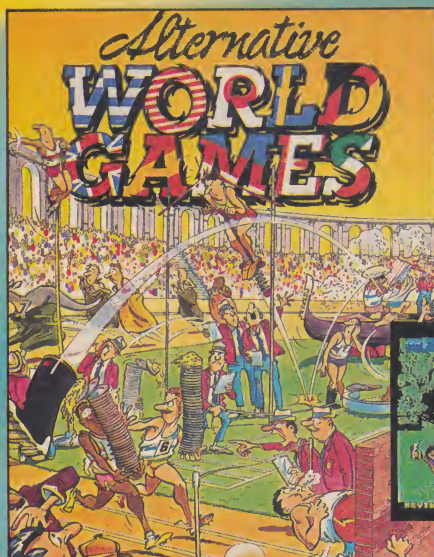
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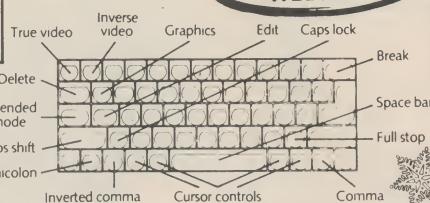
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NTLINE

with Philippa Irving



SPECTRUM MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK

I PAID only a flying visit to The PCW Show and it was on a trade day, so I didn't meet many CRASH readers. I did, though, get the chance to talk to representatives of the strategy-producing software houses, and I was struck by the fact that the American exhibitors, who promote blockbusting and expensive disk-based strategy software, were much more voluble, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their products than those who might give us Spectrum games. To be fair, I could find no representatives of PSS, Lothlorien or CCS, but I was disheartened to get no news of interesting forthcoming Spectrum strategy games. And I didn't even get a shot in MicroProse's flight-simulator machine.

In this issue and the last I've written only one game review; this month it's nothing more than a budget reissue of a golden oldie. A couple of months ago I was filling up space with reviews of compilations; it's not that I wish to decry compilations, but it would have been healthier had they been squeezed out by more urgent reviews of new releases.

Meanwhile, I receive parcels of goodies for Manoeuvres, the strategy section in ZZAP!. Glossy, expensive, elaborately-packaged disk games, resplendent with fold-out maps and chunky rulebooks, arrive regularly every month.

What can be deduced from this – and from my experiences at The PCW Show – is that the American software market is very different from the British. The Commodore releases I received are all American imports, and strategy games take a large chunk of the market in the USA.

The average American software-buyer is older than the average British gamer, thus preferring a more complex and intellectually stimulating

game. And computer-owners in the States have disk drives (the Spectrum is hardly known there), which makes an enormous difference.

Though a strategy game or wargame needs a good operating system, once it has that it can expand infinitely in all directions. Wargamers revel in any complexity which doesn't actually impair the playability of the game, but it's always limited by available memory. Beautiful tricks can be played with just 48K, and programmers who have all the space of a Commodore disk to rattle around in are demonstrably lazier and sloppier with their techniques; but if a programmer has any sense at all he can put a lot more units, maps, parameters and scenarios on a disk than in a little Spectrum.

We have the 128, but who's bothered to write specifically for the 128? Even expanded versions on the reverse side of 48K game tapes seem to be going out of fashion.

The Spectrum and its software have survived against some odds, and as I've said before I don't think flashier 8-bit machines like the Commodore can match the Spectrum when it comes to single-load arcade games. But the wargamer – and adventurer, indeed – has to face the fact that there are much more exciting things happening on machines with disk drives.

I'm sure that the recent paucity of releases has just been a temporary lull, or the result of a couple of software houses forgetting to send review copies, and that things will pick up again in the run-up to Christmas. But that doesn't alter the physical facts of computer nature.

ARENA

Producer: Bug Byte
Retail price: £2.99

Arena is quite an old game, once generously packaged in a video-style box with a glossy rulebook and now reissued in more modest garb at a budget price: the book has been reduced to a folded sheet. The game, however, is exactly the same.

The strategy game with the tacked-on arcade sequence is well known to wargamers. It's tempting to describe *Arena* as an arcade game with a tacked-on strategy section, but that wouldn't be doing justice to the fairly careful integration of styles – the static screens and the shooting-at-things screens.

The original rulebook says 'the

arcade sequence is not designed as a glossy diversion which is irrelevant to the outcome of the game', and it's perfectly true. *Arena* is actually an easygoing version of that milestone in computer gaming history, *Battlezone* or *3D Tank Duel* or whatever else it called itself in its several guises.

This is the scenario. It is 2027. By the second half of the 20th century, man had abandoned all that dangerous and expensive warfare in favour of the medieval concept of trial by single combat. Each nation has a champion, and any dispute between countries is resolved by a duel in the Battle Arena. These duels have turned into major mass-media events, and the champions are held in popular esteem.

The English champion was killed last month in a duel against Wales, fought over the excess use

of Welsh water by the English Midlands' megacities. And, for some reason not fully explored, you are the idiot who has volunteered to replace him. But before you can be allowed to defend King (presumably, by 2027) and country against French milk-importers and the like, you must prove your prowess in the Arena.

Upon this reasonably improbable scenario is hung a game which involves killing six enemy tanks with six tanks of your own; the Arena is a large area of landscape and road, much more extensive than the size of the screen display, in which the six-tank battle is fought.

At the start of the game, the player is given the choice of the tournament or the challenge version. The Challenge Game is described as a practice mode, and consists of a single bout of combat

with a single batch of six tanks; if you eliminate the enemy's tanks in this mode, you've won and the game ends.

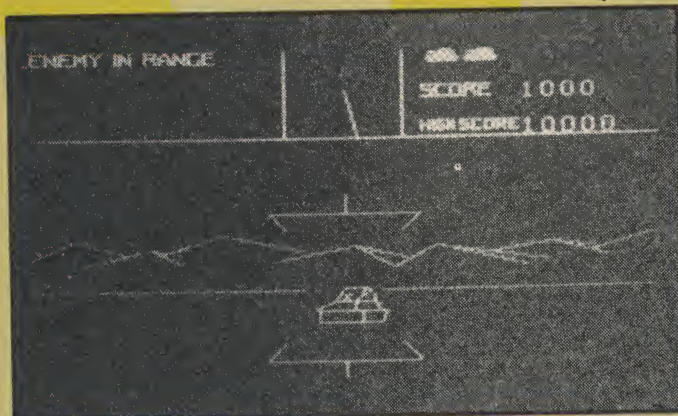
The Tournament Game, which is the 'real' game, puts *Arena* very firmly in the arcade camp. It's highly characteristic of arcade games that you simply can't win them, ever; defeat one wave and you're moved onto a slightly higher level. Such a philosophy gives little of that essential quality 'game incentive' (though others obviously don't miss it – the eternally incompletable *Space Invaders* was mildly popular), and a lot of the later, more sophisticated arcade games hold out a distant but definite prospect of winning in the end.

Arena is supposed to be about trial by single combat, and the open-endedness of its major mode makes nonsense of that. You should, if only after a lengthy

and arduous series of combat rounds, be able to vanquish the enemy and retire from the ring with a wooden battle tank or at least a large cheque. But as it is, you are the only one of the combatants who can be defeated.

Another aspect doesn't make sense: you have simultaneous control of six tanks, though you can only give orders to one at a time. I don't believe the Champion is supposed to leap out of one tank, dash across the battlefield, and take charge of the next. And yet you can't be controlling the tanks remotely, because the previous Champion was killed in combat... perhaps it's unfair to be too literal about these things.

Having chosen the type of game, the player can then select one of four models of tank. The tanks are defined by three



mind or spring a different model on you with every wave.

The player starts with his six tanks lined up in a neat row at one edge of the Arena – to get things going they have to be moved out into combat. One tank can be selected at a time, and movement orders given to it. This is effected via the inevitable icons, which seems to make a simple process convoluted; first you have to select the tank, then the movement icon, then the type of movement you want – cross-country or sticking to the road – and only then may you use a cursor on the Arena screen itself to indicate the tank's destination.

If you choose road movement, the tank will trundle round the



BRIEFING

Look – no *Chaos* hints!

Instead, **Roger Pashby** of Mansfield agreed with my review of *Samurai* in Issue 39 except on one point; I found it impossible to win even on the easiest level, and he hasn't had the least difficulty. His strategy goes something like this:

When buying troops, ignore the peasants and get at least two mounted troops and two ninjas. The ninjas are especially important and ought to be guarded carefully, for they can win the game for you.

Defend bridges by plugging them with men, so that the number of attackers coming from the other side is reduced to two. If the combat is on open ground, line up your men, alternating foot soldiers, mounted men and ninjas. Recess ninjas between troops so that they are safe from hand-to-hand attack but can let fly their shuriken at the enemy.

Sometimes the enemy trap themselves in the southwest corner of the map towards the end of the game, thanks to *Samurai*'s unintelligent movement routine. They're easy to pick off with strategically-positioned ninjas.

Using these tactics, Roger claims he has only ever lost one game. He is, however, unable to tell me the function of the mysterious inaccessible icon. I'm still waiting for someone to enlighten me.

I wasn't very impressed by Martech's *Armageddon Man* (reviewed in Issue 44), and thought it was one of those impossible-to-complete games, so I was

surprised to receive a letter from someone who has actually succeeded: **Richard Pitman** has managed to rid the world of nuclear weapons and gain a score of 100%.

The first thing to do in the game is to position spy satellites over the borders of countries till you have the best cover possible. One satellite can, if well-placed, watch over three countries at once. It's imperative to put an SDI satellite over Japan right away, as it's nearly always the first country to be attacked. The others should be concentrated over the Middle East.

Move your UNN forces to countries with abundant resources, and distribute food and technology to poorer nations till everybody has their fair share.

Routinely send letters every week to all countries telling them to improve their relations with each other. And as soon as you start the game send letters to every country to tell them to reduce their nuclear arsenals. If any country is unwilling, sit your UNN troops on it for awhile. Gradually, the nations of the world will disarm. The sooner you can get them to do so, the sooner the risk of war will be reduced.

Always reprimand countries for antisocial behaviour like ambassador-assassinating, embassy-attacking and launching nuclear weapons.

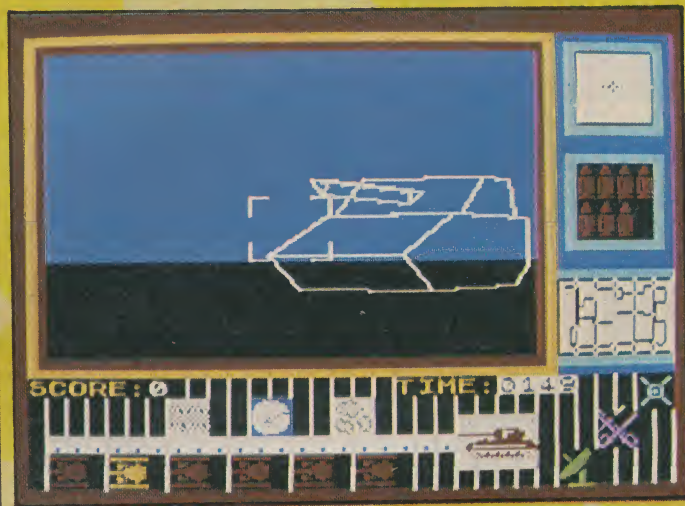
Never disagree with a country. Ignore it instead.

Richard promises disarmament and world harmony within 30 years if you follow these tips. If only it were that easy in real life!

► The original: Quicksilver's Battlezone

characteristics: speed, armour and gun calibre. Each type has a special feature, too. Light tanks are fast, but are only lightly armoured and have a low gun calibre. Their major advantage is their mine-planting capability, and the enemy don't hesitate to plant mines if they're using light tanks – though in my experience they're also adept at running over them and blowing themselves up.

Heavy tanks are well-armoured



► Arena's contrived scenario is an excuse for a Battlezone tank clone

and can do a lot of damage but move very slowly. Stealth tanks have moderate armour, speed and guns, but can't be detected by the enemy's radar and so can pop up unexpectedly. Hover tanks are very fast and can sail over usually obstructive features like rivers, and have light armour and a heavy gun.

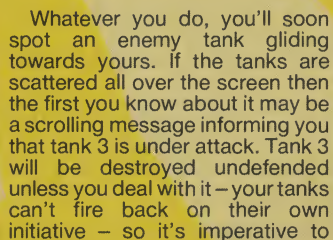
Each model has a slightly different shape onscreen, which is clearly illustrated in the rules, so you can tell what to look out for.

Unfortunately, though you can choose which type of tank you want you can't intermingle the tank types. This would give a greater variety of strategies. In the short Challenge Game you can choose the enemy's tank types as well, but in the Tournament Game the opponents make up their own

track very obediently. Ammunition stores are located by the roadside and enemy tanks tend to stick to the beaten track; they also lay their mines there.

You can give all the tanks movement orders like this, though there's little point in trying to keep track of all six at once. The game comes to an abrupt end if your master tank is destroyed, so it's wise to keep this one out of combat.

The object of *Arena* is of course to destroy the enemy's tanks. I found that the least energetic and most convenient way to do this was to sit a tank on the road quite close to an ammunition store, and wait for the enemy to come to me. The only problem is there's a time limit of a thousand seconds for each wave.



It is one of the slowest games ever, and it was successful enough to spawn clones which copied it unashamedly. In *Arena* we have this classic reproduced in loving detail. It isn't quite as slow as the original, but it certainly isn't lightning-fast. We even have the blank surroundings interrupted by the occasional deformed-looking

The presentation of *Arena* is attractive and pleasant, and though there's not much depth to

OVERALL Not bad at a budget price

LINES OF BATTLE

PI

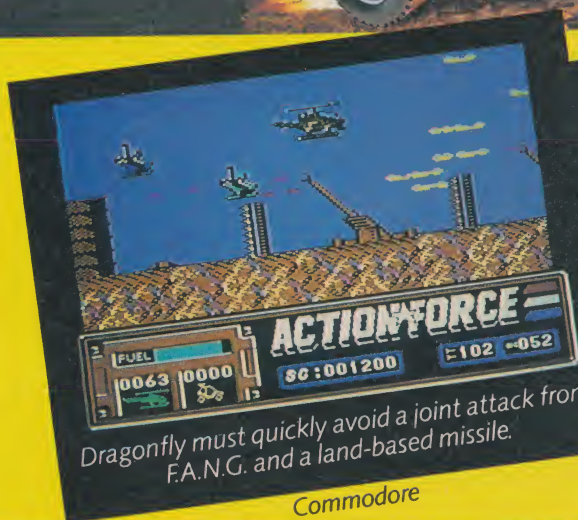


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February 1985 Issue No. 13

Released on
January 24th

Generally known as 'The Spectrum Kid', this cover used colour more ambitiously than any of its predecessors. Oliver was keen on painting an almost abstract subject, the wondrous thrill of a newcomer to the Spectrum (there were always many more after Christmas), wide open to its magic and mystery. It's a simple piece of symbolism, the Spectrum colours animating the otherwise grey, ethereal figure – yet the delicacy of the painting seems to illuminate the whole cover so that it adds up to more than the sum of its parts; there's really nothing here tied to any game.

Even game maps had become the subject of exclusivity! Witness the cover flash for *Psytraxx* from The Edge. Exclusive maps were, and still are, a rather daft notion. But by this point magazines would slap 'exclusive' over anything that could be drawn within hours of a preview copy's arrival to beat a rival magazine's carefully negotiated 'official' map.

The good turn Elite unwittingly did CRASH, which I mentioned earlier in the CRASH history, was concerned with its game *Airwolf*. This was to be a TV tie-in in reverse. Elite sent the Birmingham-based Central TV news desk a press release about the youthfulness of *Airwolf*'s programmer (actually Richard Wilcox, young, but not quite the spring chicken the release made him out to be!). Central rang Roger Kean to double-check whether this was commonplace, and whether *Airwolf* actually was a hit game. Roger told the researcher that he would have to consult his school-age reviewing team, a statement calculated to arouse Central's interest.

The thought that a bunch of mere schoolkids was passing judgement on games which would then affect large companies' sales – and all this from the obscure town of Ludlow – was irresistible.

Next day, a four-man Central TV crew arrived in Ludlow to interview Matthew Uffindell, Ben Stone, Robin Candy and Roger Kean. The TV reporters wanted to have the CRASH reviewers playing *Airwolf* and chatting about it. Unfortunately it was left to Robin to say why he thought it was a hit, and because he was the only person on the team who really didn't like the game much he was largely cut out from the edited programme, as was *Airwolf*. But CRASH appeared the following evening, December 19, on Central News in a five-minute piece.

Also that month Legend gave us *The Great Space Race*, leaving most reviewers undecided as to whether it was the biggest disappointment of all time or the biggest hoax. Large shipments hit the shelves before the reviews – and then the sales died. Sometimes, justice does prevail.

All magazine publishers were concerned that the Government would levy 15% VAT on magazines in the April Budget. Periodicals and books had always been zero-rated, and there were gloomy prognostications that such a tax would mean most magazines would have to increase their cover price to stay afloat financially, and thus lose readers. All this led Roger to predict in his editorial the death of some computer titles.

In the event magazines were left alone by VAT, but several titles would still close, as the computer-magazine market, safely sailing for three years, entered a period of great change in the wake of CRASH's quirky success.

An early software casualty of 1985 was Fantasy, whose *Backpacker's Guide To The Universe* had failed to hit the mark. Fantasy released *Drive In*, a reasonably-rated yet nevertheless disappointingly derivative game, and then, as everyone awaited news of the sequel to *Backpacker's*, simply vanished from the face of Cheltenham, leaving debts and confusion.

On the brighter side, Hewson scored a Smash with *Technician Ted*, a surprise to many outsiders, who considered the game nothing more than a competent *Jet Set Willy* clone. The CRASH team just loved it, though. Of course there was also *Airwolf* (Candy excepted) and Firebird's first full-price (Gold Range) game, *Buggy Blast* – a 3-D shoot-'em-up bettered since, but impressive then.

Derek had some thrills too: *Doomdark's Revenge* proved to be even better than its predecessor, *Lords Of Midnight*, making programmer Mike Singleton one of the most praised people in the business.

And I shouldn't avoid recalling that, to our shame, this issue also reviewed Jon Ritman's *Match Day*, failing to Smash it – we've never been allowed to forget that! And Robin Candy's never forgotten Issue 13 either, for this was his first as Playing Tipster, complete with cute little curly-haired photograph. He loved the fame, hated the photo and it has dogged him since – serves him right too.



CRASH

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EXCLUSIVE!

EVERYONE'S A WALLY

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MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
DOOMDARK'S REVENGE
TIR NA NOG AIRWOLF
the maps

OLIVER
FREY



March 1985 Issue No. 14

Released on
February 28th

In most respects, Issue 14's was the first CRASH cover to be absolutely tied to a particular game, *Everyone's A Wally*. Though it's not his favourite working style, once in a while Oliver likes to get away from the action-packed, atmospheric mode and do something a touch more comic, and the six characters in Mikro-Gen's arcade adventure offered the month's best opportunity. The picture with its bright, brash colours is in complete contrast to the previous month's. Then as now, Oliver always tried to keep readers guessing what the next issue's cover surprise will be . . .

Secret negotiations had been taking place with Chris Anderson, Editor of publisher VNU's *Personal Computer Games*, and at the start of February they came to fruition: he joined Newsfield to edit a new magazine for the Commodore 64 to be called *Sprite & Sound*. Shortly afterwards PCG ceased publication as part of VNU's planned reduction in computer titles. And just weeks after a jingoistic blast in the press from *Big K* editor Tony Tyler about the qualities computer magazines needed to survive, IPC axed his magazine after not quite a year of existence.

The dramatic changes in the outside world were reflected in CRASH Towers. The earlier financial struggles during the lean times had eased as CRASH's circulation rose, so the company could afford to hire some more staff to ease demands on Roger Kean's time. In this issue, Graeme Kidd's name first appeared as Assistant Editor, while shortly afterwards Jeremy Spencer joined CRASH to look after software and the reviews. The art department, too, expanded; Gordon Druce, now Art Director of CRASH, started as a humble paste-up artist to help David Western, who was still responsible for the photography – and had the added burden of the forthcoming Commodore magazine to cope with.

CRASH ended up on telly again, this time on TV South West's Saturday *Freeze Frame* programme. TSW wanted Matthew Uffindell and Robin Candy to discuss how CRASH reviewed games. It meant a trip to the Plymouth studios, a nerve-racking wait of four hours and then 15 minutes before the cameras. The two lads carried it off admirably, able to be blasé now that TV appearances were becoming commonplace!

Giving us one of those exclusives, Firebird brought early copies of a game called *Hedron* to be reviewed. The only change Firebird made before releasing it was to the title: *Hedron* was renamed *Gyron* – a fortunate alteration when, many weeks later, a rival magazine quietly laid charges of piracy at CRASH's door. Illegal copies of *Gyron* had found their way into the market before the game's late-spring release date. Our security was understandably called into question by Firebird, but we were able to point to our early copy, still with its original *Hedron* loading screen; recovered pirate copies had a *Gyron* loading screen. The rival magazine made no further comment.

Gyron, a 3-D maze game of great originality, requiring fast thinking and joystick dexterity, received a well-deserved Smash, as did Mikro-Gen's *Everyone's A Wally* for improving yet again on the Wally Week saga. Adventure International caught a Smash in the sticky web of *Spiderman*, second in its Questprobe series from Marvel Comics and American adventure-programming whiz Scott Adams. Classic game themes earned Incentive and Bubble Bus Smashes too – Incentive for a licensed conversion of *Moon Cresta*, an unusual departure for the software house best known for its text adventures. But the shoot-'em-up was lovingly adapted for the Spectrum and proved that a well-implemented alien-zapper could still be a winner.

Previously, Bubble Bus had only been a Commodore 64 house, but with Steve Crow's *Wizard's Lair* it had a Spectrum winner, and the game went on to be converted for the 64 where it became an early Sizzler in ZZAP! 64 . . .

ZZAP! . . . ? Well, no-one really liked *Sprite & Sound*. Newsfield was expected to come up with something as sharp-sounding and short as CRASH, so in the end we settled on ZZAP!, adding the 64 as an afterthought. But as events were soon to prove there was nothing 'afterthought' about ZZAP!



CRASH

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April 1985 Issue No. 15

Released on
March 28th

After the Christmas cover and those of the two previous issues, Oliver wanted to get back to the feeling generated by Issue One's picture, a strong, grotesque, large-face image. The impact of this technohorror is undeniable, working even more effectively when you compare its organic, slaving toothiness and the multifaceted, fly-like eyes. But a closer examination of the brilliant eyes reveals them to be illuminated Spectrum keyboards, the famous colours just picked out in a refracted flare at the bottom left. This painting was not related to any known game.

In March we had reviewed Richard Shepherd's *Ski Star 2000*, a sports simulation by Pete Cooke, remarkable for having a downhill-course construction kit and its use of icons – it was the first game to really implement this new 'user-friendly' technique. Sadly, it was to be Shepherd's last release. The text-adventure market had shrunk financially and Shepherd's almost total dependence on the genre left the business vulnerable. Only those with powerful adventure product could hope to succeed: houses like Level 9, for instance.

In April stalwart Micromega came up with the disappointing *Day In The Life*, a spoof on Sir Clive Sinclair. It proved to be Micromega's last game, and the label was absorbed into its commercial-programming parent company as quietly as a ship sliding under the waves.

April's issue presented more features than had been possible before. Articles on Mizar, Scott Adams, pop/computer star Chris Sievey and the regular cover-artist slot showed clearly the effect of having more writers on the staff. Two new regular sections appeared: Tech Niche, soon to attract the talents of Simon N Goodwin, and my Merely Mangram preview column – recognition of the increasing importance to readers of early games news, and made possible by Robin taking over the Playing Tips.

But we effectively lost a reviewer at this point; after 15 months of unremitting critical game-playing, Matthew Uffindell felt he had burned out. He had borne the brunt, writing a comment on every game ever reviewed, and now he felt it was time to concentrate on his other CRASH job up in the art department, the technical side of making printers' halftone pictures and the rudimentary film-planning techniques which he and Roger Kean were developing. Though Matthew remained on the masthead as a contributing writer for several more months, he handed over his function to the very capable Jeremy Spencer, coming down to editorial thereafter only on rare occasions.

For three years the magazine *Leisure Electronics Trade* had organised a computer-entertainment trade show, and at the start of this issue their biggest show yet was held at London's Olympia. It was a huge success, though at the time no-one knew it would be the last and that before the year was out *LET* would cease publication. At the show a tall, bespectacled young man wearing an atrociously-coloured Hawaiian shirt under a dark jacket approached Roger Kean and announced himself to be a runner-up in the CRASH Reviewers' Competition. It was John Minson, then setting out to break into journalism. What he wanted was an opportunity to write for CRASH, and soon enough he would do so.

Also at the *LET* Show, exhibiting for the first time, was System 3. Its cheerfully aggressive proprietor Mark Cale had his first Spectrum product almost ready and wanted a Smash for it. He got the game in just before the issue closed for press, and *Death Star Interceptor* was a Smash. So was US Gold's *Raid Over Moscow*, the CRASH team happily oblivious to the controversy raging in both trade and consumer press about the game's dubious political xenophobia.

An unusual hit came from a company better known for utilities than games: Romantic Robot, which produced *Wiggler*. Jeremy fell in love with the cute graphics, but it was Robin Candy's favourable decision on playability that made it a Smash. Everyone, however, considered *Alien 8* to be marvellous despite the climate of opinion on Ultimate's releases and their continuing similarities. The Ultimate debate would dominate my letters pages for ages, but I still think *Alien 8* deserved its accolade.



CRASH

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OLIVER
FREY

May 1985 Issue No. 16

Released on
April 25th

It had been decided to run a sports-simulation feature in May's issue for some time, so a topic for the cover wasn't in question, but Oliver's problem was how to portray the subject without using the trite picture-montage method. In the event, he turned the idea on its head, creating this startling montaged footballer, his body entirely made up of recognisable sporting equipment, booting a spaceship toward the onlooker. Perhaps what's most remarkable is that the picture was painted in only three to four hours while Oliver fitted in his new commitment to ZZAP!.

After a few verbal run-ins with the rival publisher of *Your Spectrum* (now *Your Sinclair*) we had some innocent, esoteric fun on the cover by referring to the sports games article as: 'Sports Scene – Last gasp of a dying genre?' (The publisher of *Your Spectrum* was called Sportscene Publications.) A rather more virulent form of such fun was shortly to get CRASH into a lot of trouble, but more of that later . . .

Despite the time of year – start of the summer slump – software held up really well, and there was a lot of it about. The six Smashes were very varied: two from the arcades for US Gold, *Bruce Lee* (the first of the kick-'em-ups, except perhaps Bug-Byte's *Kung Fu*) and *Spy Hunter* were great fun, Hewson's Steve Turner repeated his successful 3-D adventure formula with a return to Avalon in *Dragon Torc* and made it even more fluent, Level 9 predictably delighted Derek Brewster with the unusual *Emerald Isle*, the name of Imagine reappeared under its new owners, Ocean, with the interesting simulation *World Baseball*, and Melbourne House offered a mixture of brain-teaser and 3-D action in *Starion*.

There's a story attached to the last. Paula Byrne, then at Melbourne House, came up to Ludlow to show the CRASH team an early version of the game. Supposed to arrive for lunch, she finally appeared at four o'clock, worn out by the drive and having lost her way several times. As you can imagine, Paula wasn't in the best of moods, but it worsened when she opened up the cassette case to find that the tape inside was not only an old Commodore 64 game, it wasn't even by Melbourne House! We received *Starion* by post a few days later. The story has remained a secret till now, but, Paula, the statutory 30 years is too long to wait to reveal the truth!

It's interesting to note that during 1985 the average price of Spectrum games had already risen to £6.95 and, in many cases, £7.95, an increase of some £2 over the two years 1983-85. Today's prices reflect a further rise of £2, again over roughly two years. The major exceptions then were Ultimate at the top end of the scale with £9.99 games, and Mastertronic, Firebird and Atlantis at the lower end, all of which have maintained their budget structures of £1.99 and £2.99.

And at a budget price John Minson was given his first tentative try-out for CRASH, turning in some news items, while in the fledgling Tech Niche section another new contributor appeared: Jon Bates. Composer and computer musicologist, he reviewed nine music programs, further expanding the scope of CRASH.

After their TV tie-in deals *Fall Guy*, *Dukes Of Hazzard* and *Airwolf*, Elite popped up with one of the oddest endorsement deals of the day, the not unsuccessful horse-racing game *Grand National*. (Elite was about to go one better and produce a tire tie-in with Dunlop for the appalling *911TS*). Another, and less successful, tie-in was Quicksilver's *Fantastic Voyage* based on the 20th Century Fox film. Computer games hadn't quite matured enough to deal with the big boys of Hollywood, and *Fantastic Voyage* was an old hat film by some years. But this situation was changing; soon tie-in games would compete with their film sources for simultaneous release.

While we were working on CRASH, down in Yeovil, Somerset, where Chris Anderson lived and the ZZAP! 64 writers were based, the new magazine's first issue was being completed. Newsfield was about to double its production base.



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

P REVIEW

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

OCEAN = * * * * + * * * + * * * + * * *

P PROFILE

DENTON

THE TEAM

DESIGNS

BEHIND SHADOWFIRE FRANKIE
GIFT FROM THE GODS



BANG!



SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

YOUR SPECTRUM

Fit for the scrapheap?

Where to go for rescue...



May 1985
Issue No. 17

Released on
May 30th

Ocean's Frankie Goes To Hollywood was the obvious cover choice for the month; the band members didn't appear in the game, but Oliver was determined they would on the cover. For his departure point he picked the kitsch theme from the Power Of Love promo video where they all appear as gilded cherubs around an ornate picture frame. It was then a question of fitting in some of the elements of the game. This, perhaps the most unusual CRASH cover, was also the most accomplished representation of a particular game Oliver had done to date.

Once again, we took a little dig at *Your Spectrum* on the cover flash, this time in a reference to computer repair shops: 'Is Your Spectrum fit for the Scrapheap?' But the real issue of the month was Denton Designs, the talented group of programmers who had started at the old Imagine. Now, part-financed by Ocean and contractually supported by Beyond, they had formed a nucleus of games designers and programmers. Denton Designs was the most visible tip of a new development in the games-software industry.

The back-bedroom days were over; larger and more financially powerful companies like Ocean, US Gold, Argus and British Telecom were taking over smaller independents who had survived from the pioneering days. There was a more professional approach. Programmers no longer wanted to bother with marketing and distribution, programming was their strength, and so a number of development groups were springing up, people who didn't want to spend time selling their work but who also didn't want to be part of a large corporation. They were the new software contractors, and none received as much publicity as Denton Designs.

Gift From The Gods for Ocean was Denton Designs's first released game; in this issue we extensively previewed *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, but it was *Shadowfire* for Beyond, the game Denton Designs first contracted for, which was reviewed. Looking back, *Shadowfire* actually lacked content, but its shallow qualities were well disguised by the novel icon presentation. Pete Cooke's *Ski Star 2000* may have been the first game to use icons, but *Shadowfire* was the first to base the entire gameplay and control on these graphic devices.

In fact, Robin Candy found *Shadowfire* so easy he'd completed it on the second day after its arrival and was able to prove the point in this issue's Playing Tips!

Much more enjoyably frustrating, though decidedly without the evident programming cleverness of *Shadowfire*, was US Gold's *Tapper*, a beer-swilling experience of keeping bar customers satisfied that defied everyone's arcade abilities. It just made a Smash because it was irresistible!

If there had been any doubt the month before about the demise of sports simulations as a genre (and history has certainly proved it to be an ill-founded doubt), then New Generation's endorsed *Jonah Barrington's Squash* helped put fears on the shelf, though few reviewers thought the presentation had advanced much on Psion's *Match Point*.

What it did have was synthesized speech for the scoring (*Death Star Interceptor* had also had a go at that), which prompted Matthew, in a rare reappearance as a reviewer, to say it was difficult to hear without his 'famdabidozy-super-blaster radio amplifier' – a precursor of the 128, no doubt.

Derek had a couple of Smashes in *Witch's Cauldron* from Mikro-Gen, an adventure using Wally Week-style graphics, and the excellent *Runestone* from Games Workshop, whose graphics showed it wasn't only Mike Singleton who could provide 'landscaping' techniques.

At this moment a crisis arose. Though Newsfield's new Commodore title ZZAP! 64 had taken off extremely well, production problems were emerging with its editorial base being far away in Yeovil. Chris Anderson had provided a marvellous product, but he didn't want to move up to Ludlow, whereas Newsfield's management wanted the magazine in its own premises. There was a head-on clash which resulted in Chris leaving the company and the ZZAP! team arriving in Ludlow in the middle of June as we started on the July issue. We all had to move round to make room . . .



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

**Prisoner
of the evil
sorceress
in...**

**DUN
DARACH**
GARGOYLE

US \$2
SPECTRUM
PRIZES GALORE!
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
IN OUR COMPETITIONS
The Subscription offer to beat all others!
US GOLD OR OCEAN GAMES FREE!

OLIVER
FREY



June 1985 Issue No. 18

Released on
June 27th

The Dun Darach cover painting caused a fair stir – some readers reported seeing the magazine on newsagents' top shelves – though the subject matter is really only a fond reworking of many a pulp SF/sword-and-sorcery theme. As usual, Oliver did not move far away from Spectrum references either; note the rainbow colouring of Skar's cloak and the air around her. Perhaps the erotic connotations of having a man in bondage to a woman, even if a sorceress, were too much for some chauvinist CRASH readers, who would feel the same about Issue 31 with its Hannah Smith cover.

A dark month for the software business: confirmation arrived that Fantasy had definitely gone, and the financially ailing independent Micromania was being forced into liquidation, unable to withstand the loss of payments after its distributor, Tiger, collapsed. It seemed a shame; never a frontrunner, Micromania had nevertheless produced a handful of interesting games, last but not least being *Project Future*, a Smash in Issue 14.

The biggest failure, however, was that of Bug-Byte, which went into receivership during June. Bug-Byte was founding father of the home-computer game and many well-known individuals and several software houses had sprung from the Liverpool company. To be fair, the quality of Bug-Byte's products had dropped; still, it was a sad surprise to many, causing almost as many fears that the end was nigh as had Imagine's disintegration.

But, like Imagine, Bug-Byte would be resurrected: Argus, unable to confirm a merger deal before Bug-Byte went into receivership, later purchased it from the receiver to use as a budget label.

And, to paraphrase, in the midst of death there is life: up came Mirrorsoft. After a short and low-profile history of educational software, Mirrorsoft suddenly produced *Dynamite Dan*, the ever so attractive *Jet Set Willy* clone which because of its playability, clever map and fiendish difficulty well deserved the Smash it received.

It was a good month for quality games, in fact. *Dun Darach* left Cuchulainn fan Robin Candy in paroxysms of delight as he reviewed Gargoyle's third game (and pleased Roger Kean, because he had a credit in the inlay for thinking up the idea of numbering all the houses, a suggestion he had offered Gargoyle's Greg Follis during the *LET Show*). Only recently established on the 64, Palace Software converted its Commodore hit *Cauldron* to the Spectrum and had it Smashed, while Mikro-Gen revived familiar graphics and puzzles with *Herbert's Dummy Run*, in which Wally Week took more of a back seat as his toddler son Smashed up the shop.

What these very different games had in common was that they were new neither in ideas nor in gameplay but their implementation was exemplary. Programmers were now concentrating on providing a long, complex game with large, densely detailed graphics and decent helpings of humour. None of these virtues applied to Domark's big game, though. For the majors, fighting a battle for the best licences going, it must have been galling to see Domark pick up James Bond in *A View To A Kill*, especially as the multipart game proved a great disappointment.

How could I know that in another year, the CRASH enthusiast whose Forum heading I used in this issue – a 'desperate art student' who'd sent his drawing to the Bug Box – would be working for Newsfield? Was I to blame for Richard Eddy?

ZZAP! staff writers Gary Penn and Julian Rignall arrived in Ludlow during June, halfway through work on their issue. This was the moment when Roger Kean, perforce of necessity, took over editorship of ZZAP! and relinquished his role on CRASH. It seemed to many readers a traitorous act from the man who had become so firmly associated with the Spectrum, but in fact Roger continued to keep an eye on the magazine he had helped found a year and a half earlier, as Graeme Kidd moved up from Assistant Editor to Editor.

In the battle for circulation – and CRASH's was rising fast, threatening the longer-established titles – it seemed to be vital to be seen to be first with the reviews. CRASH staff were increasingly exercised over rival magazines getting to review some games before we did – one magazine, now defunct, appeared to rate on the basis of seeing unfinished copies. It was aggravating, and the situation was about to boil over spectacularly . . .



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 19 AUGUST 1985

95p

At last the 64K Spectrum!

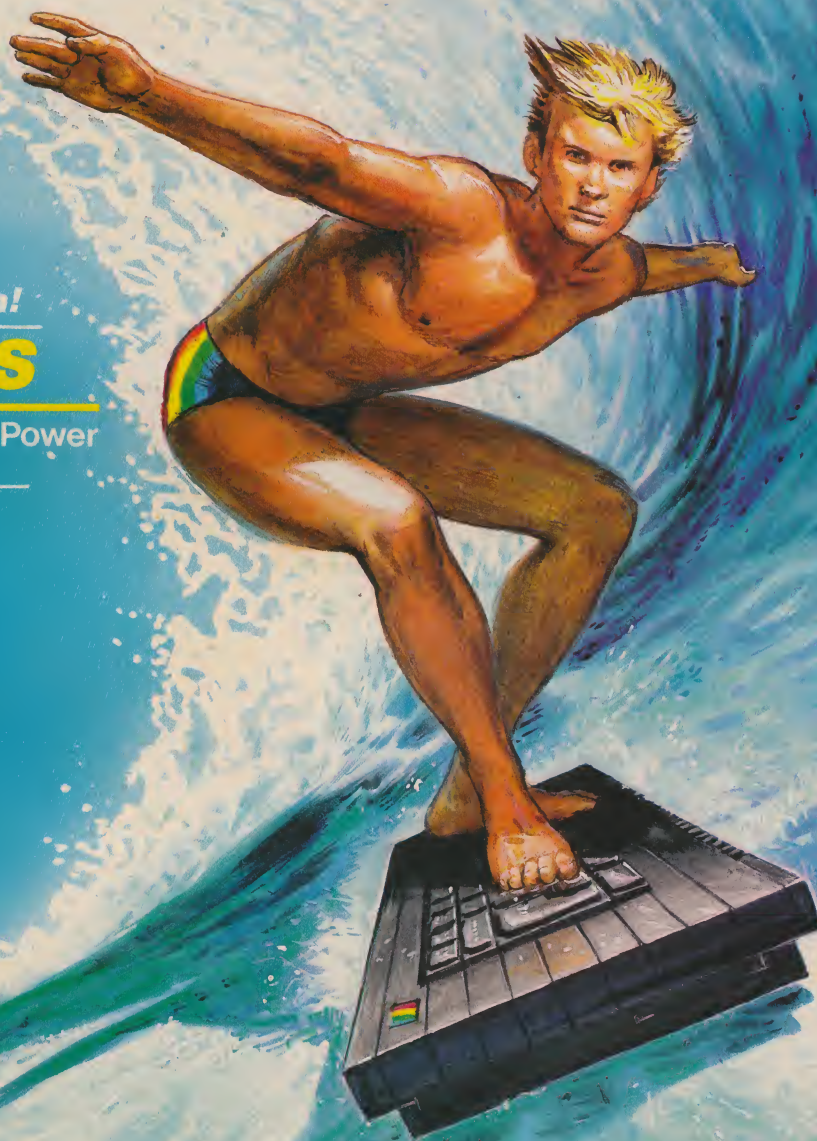
MIKRO-PLUS

16, 48 now 64K of Program Power

MIKRO-GEN

Frankie Comes to Ludlow

And gets a full review...



**Summertime
Sports
Software Scene**

Grab a piece of the action!

Super Sub Offer
HALF PRICE HARDWARE!
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
**Great Pull-Out
Poster**

OLIVER
FREY

August 1985 Issue No. 19

Released on
July 25th

The Spectrum surfer cover has some things in common with Issue Eight's, the man diving into a pool: the cool blues of water, the surreal use of a computer as a surfboard. It heralded the arrival of the Spectrum+ at the height of summer. The primary task of a magazine cover is to stand out from the plethora of other titles on a newsagent's shelves. When it came to using colour, strangely juxtaposed images and dynamic composition, Oliver Frey's CRASH cover pictures were, and still are, among the best. They always make an immediate impact.

Surfers dice with danger in their sport; the cover was an apt symbol for the issue. In a fit of self-righteousness – which to be honest had always lain just under the surface of CRASH's editorial stance, sometimes threatening to break out but usually contained – new Editor Graeme Kidd and his small team set aside four pages to lampoon rival magazine *Sinclair User*. And in a wave of what proved to be ill-judged enthusiasm for the project, everyone involved from editorial to art dived in to make it a perfect lampoon.

Events turned sour when Jeremy Spencer handed *Sinclair User*'s editor an advance copy of the issue. Within hours, *Sinclair User*'s publishing company, East Midland Allied Press, sought an injunction to prevent the issue being distributed. As many of the events which took place thereafter are still *sub judice* (going through the legal process), it is not possible to mention them here.

EMAP won its injunction and the issue had to be recalled, the four offending pages trimmed and a sticker placed on the cover stating briefly why they were missing before the magazines could be redistributed.

To avoid the possibility of a libel suit being filed against Graeme Kidd and Newsfield, the matter was settled out of court, and in the Christmas Special we printed an official apology.

Ironically, public feeling about all these goings-on appeared to run in CRASH's favour – and whether or not it had any bearing on the matter, from that moment on the magazine's circulation spiralled rapidly upwards, from around 50,000 copies a month to over 100,000.

But before all this took place, while the edition was being prepared, the CRASH team treated themselves to some more innocent fun. Part Five of the Sinclair Story which we had been running dealt with Sinclair's battery car, the C5. Seen as risible in many quarters, the C5 found an unlikely home in Ludlow when a local car-hire firm purchased several to act as sight-seeing buggies for the tourists who flock to the town every summer – strange when you consider how hilly Ludlow is, and therefore how much pedalling the tourists had to do to help the motor cope with the strain!

For the article several CRASH reviewers went down to the car-hire firm and took the C5s out for a reviewing trip. The resultant buggy wars on the market carpark did a lot for the C5's reputation among CRASH staff, but sadly failed to save it from its ultimate fate of obscurity.

More germane to the magazine, though, Ocean gave us the Spectrum version of *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, all icons, windowing, spoof games, puzzles and highly creditable graphics; what with this and Beyond's *Spy Vs Spy* with its simultaneous split-screen presentation, it looked like hit games from now on were going to have to be complex and sophisticated to succeed – though of the two other Smashes, Imagine's *Hypersports* was really more of the same only better done, and *Nodes Of Yesod* was more of a different same only done superlatively by Odin.

A newcomer's advert is likely to arouse curiosity and Odin's was very classy. It ran for two months before the game's release, but Odin wasn't really as virgin as everyone thought, it was just another name for Thor, whose high-tech Liverpool offices were situated immediately opposite the sad-looking, derelict windows of Bug-Byte – in the midst of death, there's life . . .



A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.20 SEPTEMBER 1985

95p

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

RED MOON

Another Smash from
Level 9

MONTY ON THE RUN

Gremlin

POPEYE

Dk Tronics

THE ELECTRIC PENCIL COMPANY

From Fourth Protocol
to Zoids

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
DUN DARACH
ALIEN 8
The Maps

OLIVER
FREY

September 1985 Issue No. 20

Released on
August 29th

It was time for another grotesque cover after three relatively calm ones, and with fangs and venomous saliva foremost in his mind Oliver sought a suitable subject. He found it in Level 9's Red Moon adventure, which featured mythical beasts. It's interesting to compare Oliver's painting with that of the game's packaging: Level 9 provided a sinuously elegant snake-dragon, vibrantly attractive and decorative, CRASH had this stark, violent monster, virtually bursting off the cover with its sheer ferocity. The startling impact is quite otherworldly and satisfyingly terrifying.

After a terse apology for the delay in putting Issue 19 on sale, the editorial speculated on Sinclair's rumoured launch of a 128K Spectrum. Commodore had released a 128K machine, Amstrad was about to show its CPC 6128, it certainly seemed time that the Spectrum should be upgraded. Sources suggested Sinclair's new computer was code-named The Derby, and speculated that it might appear at The PCW Show in September, only a month away. Prediction can be a dodgy game, and as we now know the wait would be far longer.

CRASH Software Editor Jeremy Spencer was part of the local landed gentry (so he claimed!), and on his several acres raised sheep who thought they were dogs, dogs who thought they were writers (a picture of one appeared at an Apricot keyboard) and horses who thought they were artists – well, one foal was named Oli. Oli became something of a mascot, with regular update pictures appearing as he grew up. This rural aspect of what was otherwise a technological entertainment magazine puzzled many of our rivals, and possibly some readers too, but it was all part of CRASH's idiosyncratic style.

Visitors to the Ludlow offices could have been forgiven for thinking that eccentricity and not idiosyncrasy was the hallmark of CRASH staff, for the place was littered with flashing, whirring dinosaur monsters – Zoids. They were there because Martech had the licence to produce a Zoids game, there for reference because Martech wanted Oliver to do a cover, and there because Jeremy Spencer couldn't resist them. He interviewed Martech's Zoids development team, Electronic Pencil Company, a job made all the more satisfying since the team had also programmed Jeremy's other favourite game, *The Fourth Protocol*, which Derek had Smashed the month before.

Icons had come a long way since Pete Cooke's first tentative use of them and they were obviously here to stay. In *The Fourth Protocol* icons were more than just a useful device, they were the very essence of the game, helping to generate a nail-biting atmosphere in this unusual adventure. Electronic Pencil Company was, like Denton Designs, another example of the new spirit of professionalism in software writing which was making it easier for software houses to concentrate on sourcing ideas and marketing them.

This more forward-thinking approach, however, placed extra pressures on Roger Kean as the publisher of CRASH. Software houses had caught on to the power of having their game featured on a cover. At this stage Martech wanted a Zoids cover soon, Domark wanted one for its *Friday The 13th* licence, and Beyond wanted one for the much-hyped forthcoming Superman game. Of course, all these would appear at the same time, he was assured, so they all wanted their covers the same month! In the event, both Martech and Domark were satisfied and Superman turned into a debacle.

After a couple of disappointing Monty games, Gremlin Graphics put Monty's creator, Peter Harrap, back into the hot seat and he turned up with the Smashed *Monty On The Run*. His original was barely revamped but the sequel was more difficult and had the novelty of a somersaulting mole, a device used many times since. Others were sprinting as well, for Design Design released *On The Run*, an elegant maze game with large graphics by Stuart Ruecroft, who had earlier been employed by Fantasy. Also among the month's hits were Costa Panayi's isometric *Highway Encounter*, *Red Moon* and the welcome return of veteran Spectrum programmer Don Priestly with *Popeye*, using the huge, animated characters that have since become his trademark.



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 21 OCTOBER 1985

95p



PREVIEW

Return of the Seiddab!

ASTRO CLONE

HEWSON CONSULTANTS

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
BRILL PULL-OUT
CENTREFOLD

PLUS

REVIEWS
TECH-NICHE
ROBIN CANDY
PLAYING TIPS
LLOYD MANGRAM
CRASH COURSE
DEREK BREWSTER
COMPETITIONS
PROFILES

OLIVER
REY

October 1985 Issue No. 21

Released on
September 26th

We hadn't had a space shoot-'em-up picture on the cover of CRASH all year, and only the footballer from Issue 16 had managed to get above the stratosphere. Oliver looked around for a possible subject for this issue, settling on a game previewed in it: Hewson's Astro Clone. In truth the cover could be referring to any number of games, or no game at all, but it's a fascinating insight into an illustrator's mind, showing that without some subject to hang the design on in the first place it's hard to get going at all. The ends need a means to justify them.

The eighth PCW Show was over, giving an excuse to print lots of those pictures you cringe at years later – and people wonder why I hate being photographed! Oddly, the usual flurry of hasty releases just in time for the show failed to materialise, leaving the hordes milling around watching demos.

CRASH had little better to offer, for the real action took place in the featured previews, which gave the ever-space-grabbing Robin Candy a fine time: three previews only he could handle (according to him). A Gargoyle Games fan since *Tir Na Nòg*, he pestered Greg Follis daily till an early version of the next game was viewable at the company's Dudley offices. *Marsport* followed in the footsteps of *Dun Darach*, but with a new hero and a different style of control from the familiar presentation.

A Steve Turner fan since *Avalon*, Robin was able to gurggle happily about Hewson's *Astro Clone*, which weirdly enough resembled *Marsport* in some screens. And a dangerous *Elite* fan since Firebird released the Commodore version, he could finally get to grips with an early copy for the Spectrum.

Another preview – and it turned out to be far too early – was of *Elite*'s cartoon licence *Scooby Doo*. As outlined in this issue, the game sounded and looked marvellous, but alas it was not to be. *Elite* ran into programming problems which it couldn't resolve, and dropped the game. Later it would be contracted out to Gargoyle Games to redesign and would appear in time for the next year's PCW Show.

Actually in review, the Smashes included *Nightshade* from Ashby-based Ultimate with the confusing programming credit of Rare Ltd. Despite its high rating, there was a hint of disapproval in the critical comments, a note that no progress had been made since *Alien 8*. Speculation ran rife that perhaps the most successful software house ever had begun to lose its touch, not helped by further rumours that British Telecom, which was releasing converted Ultimate games on the 64 through Firebird, was in the market to buy the Leicestershire company.

Derek Brewster picked on an adventure with the Wild West-like title of *The Touchstones Of Rhianon* to Smash – actually it was about Robin Of Sherwood – but down in arcade alley the joystick-wielders were struggling over the complex karate movements in Melbourne House's genre-founding *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*. There was some disagreement over its playability, but its evident qualities made it a Smash.

The results of the 1985 CRASHtionnaire were published, revealing that at 17.2 years the average reader's age was far higher than anyone had anticipated, and that Playing Tips was a clear winner as a section. Another result was a demand for a pay increase from Robin (it went to arbitration, but I can't remember the outcome).

Three fresh names appeared: Simon N Goodwin's Tech Tipster contributions started, answering those little problems that affect the technically-minded, and Ian Craig featured as On The Cover artist. Ian would later join Newsfield as an illustrator. The third was a new staff member, Sean Masterson, who took over Frontline after a two-month gap left by Angus Ryall's departure from computer gaming.

This month saw the start of Newsfield's Amstrad magazine AMTIX! in direct competition with *Amstrad Action*, which was launched at the same time. Jeremy Spencer became AMTIX! coeditor with Roger Kean, each of them doubling their existing roles. And Newsfield had spawned its first spin-off, for *Amstrad Action*'s publisher was Chris Anderson, ex-editor of ZZAP!.



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.22 NOVEMBER 1985

95p

**THE ZOIDS
ARE
COMING!**

Will they take the planet
by force? We look at
MARTECH's exciting new
project for Christmas



SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
**COMPETITIONS
GALORE
WIN! WIN!**

November 1985 Issue No. 22

Released on
October 24th

The Zoids cover almost failed to materialise. Martech suffered delays in development of the program, and would have preferred to put it off for a month. But the December cover was already promised to another. After much hesitation it was decided to go with the Zoids game preview at the very last moment; so here is another painting executed by Oliver with only a couple of hours to spare. As large figures on a monstrous scale, explosions and blasting beams of light have always been among of his specialities, it was not a serious problem to produce something excellent in a short time.

Excitement! Sinclair had produced a 128K Spectrum! Well, not quite. He'd signed a deal with Investronica of Spain and the Spanish had a 128K machine. It was something of an insult, but to be fair, as the editorial stated, the City had given Sir Clive a hard time, no wonder he turned abroad for comfort. Would the new machine be made available in Britain? Not likely, not with the financial position of Sinclair, sitting on stocks of abortive QLs and yet-to-be-sold Spectrum + machines in the high streets. CRASH did eventually get its hands on a Spanish 128 and discovered that it would have been of little relevance to the British market. We were still left waiting.

CRASH's editorial masthead had expanded yet again, to credit Gary Penn, Julian Rignall and Gary Liddon as contributing writers. This was at a time when there was an all-hands-to-the-deck feeling about the small staff putting together three magazines. Penn and Rignall, however, only contributed a little to CRASH reviews, working mostly on ZZAP!

Gary Liddon had originally applied in the previous year. He wasn't taken on then, but had gone on to do reviews for *Big K*, and when that magazine closed he went to work for Domark. It was there that Jeremy Spencer met him during a preview for *A View To A Kill* and was impressed enough to suggest Newsfield hire him as a Staff Writer. At first Gary's function was to rove between all three magazines, but eventually he settled down as a ZZAP! writer, remaining with the magazine till Newsfield appointed him to Thalamus, its software house.

Astro Clone and *Marsport* were two of the Smashes for the issue, hardly surprises. Neither was *Elite* a surprise. The Spectrum version lacked some of the Commodore's qualities, but made up for them that in speed; it was undoubtedly a Smash. The Edge also earned its spurs with Bo Jangeborg's *Fairlight*. It was superficially like recent Ultimate 3-D games, but CRASH reviewers saw it as knocking 'Filmation' into a cocked hat and providing a depth of game to go with the graphics. Bubble Bus scored again with Steve Crow and *Starquake*, a beautifully-designed game which led one reviewer to comment that it was the route Ultimate should have taken.

Melbourne House's follow-up to *The Way Of the Exploding Fist*, another joystick-manipulating fight game called *Fighting Warrior*, struck a chord of discontent. It just didn't work well enough. But Sean Masterson found himself satisfied interviewing a programmer working for CRL on a game called *Tau Ceti*. The programmer in question was Pete Cooke, veteran of Richard Shepherd adventure days (*Urban Upstart* for instance) and responsible for CRL's modest *Juggernaut*. Sean was impressed by Pete's good taste in science-fiction novels, but there seemed no doubt that *Tau Ceti* would be a success for CRL, a long-lived software house in search of a hit game.

After some 20 months of single-handedly photographing all game screens for the magazines, David Western got some help in the form of a young local photographer called Cameron Pound. It was to be some months before Cameron ceased to be a trainee and got his name on the masthead, but today Cameron and his assistant Michael Parkinson take and process hundreds of colour and monochrome pictures every month.

As we went to press, deals were being finalised for December's cover for Domark. The idea seemed sound enough, but in several ways it was to be a severe problem . . .



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 23 DECEMBER 1985

95p

FRIDAY THE 13THTM THE COMPUTER GAME

Dripping blood capsules,
DOMARK came to visit

PRE-CHRISTMAS SMASHES

What do YOU want Santa
to bring you?
Start thinking now

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
COMPUTER ART
The Spectrum produces
TV graphics...

LIVER
THAT

December 1985 Issue No. 23

Released on
November 21st

As this is a personal view, I'll be honest and say that though this isn't the worst CRASH cover it's certainly Oliver's poorest. There's no doubting the visual impact created by the hand seen in close-up, bearing its blood-drenched dagger, but there's also little doubt that this was a subject in which Oliver had little interest – or rather, he felt less out of sorts with the subject than with the way the Editor wanted it portrayed. To fans of the gore-a-minute film series, there was no need for a cover line to say 'Jason's back' in Friday The 13th.

Some readers, newsagents and several readers' parents were appalled by the cover, and extended their opprobrium to the *Friday The 13th* preview which showed Domark's Mark Strachan and Dominic Wheatley posed in a particularly gruesome and bloody manner. One parent, so upset by what she saw, sent the whole caboodle to the Press Council. Nothing came of it, but clearly the affair was an unhappy one. I defended the cover in the Forum, but it was seen as unfortunate in the sense that the preview was a thin editorial excuse for forcing the cover idea on Oliver – especially thin when you consider that the game itself would not be reviewed till June 1986 and then would only receive 32%!

Roger Kean had expressed doubts about the subject, feeling that it would be better to do a humorous picture, more in the cartoon style of *Mad*, but he was away from Ludlow when the final decision was taken and the cover painted.

Two other previews struck a somewhat happier note. Robin Candy had been aware for some time that Gargoyle Games had in mind a 'fun package' for Christmas, so he was pleased that they revealed the new comic hero, Sweevo, to him first. The other game previewed had been gestating far longer, for over 18 months in fact. It was PSS's *Swords And Sorcery*, programmed by Mike Simpson, who also devised the MIDAS adventure-writing system which *Swords And Sorcery* used. MIDAS was vaunted as a revolutionary piece of adventure/role-playing game graphics and control software from which would spring many games in the same vein as *Swords And Sorcery*. However, to date not much has been made of it.

An unusual event occurred: Mosaic's *The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole* was reviewed twice, once in the ordinary game reviews, where it got 86%, and again in Derek's Adventure Trail, where he gave it a Smash. That was no bad thing for the reader – but a damned nuisance for the index and historical database!

There were seven Smashes in all, reflecting the closeness of Christmas boom time. With only a few games to its credit – but very polished ones – Microsphere reprised *Skool Daze* with the improved *Back To Skool*. Melbourne House scored two with its *Marble Madness*-like *Gyroscope*, and the spoof adventure of foreign seaside silliness, *Terrormolinos*. Durell gave us *Critical Mass*, a game I never liked much, and the flight-simulation freaks at Digital Integration slammed in with *Tomahawk* – that military helicopter that positively reeks of danger.

The last Smash was for a new software house, Electric Dreams. Launched at The PCW Show, Rod Cousens's Electric Dreams was an offshoot of Activision. Its first released game was *I, Of The Mask*, an elegantly contrived 3-D 'tunnel' experience by Sandy White, whose previous games were the revolutionary *Ant Attack* and its sequel *Zombie Zombie*.

Swallowing up existing software houses was by now an established practice, but creating offshoot labels like Electric Dreams was fairly new. It smacked of corporation tactics and echoed the music industry with its giant parent recording companies and their numerous labels each specialising in a different musical style. Ocean had done much the same with Imagine when it bought the title from the Receiver. To start with, Imagine specialised in sports games, but with its Konami licences Imagine's game portfolio broadened out. No-one was quite clear what Electric Dreams would do that was different from Activision, but everyone agreed it would be interesting to wait and see.



A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

No.24 1985/1986

£1.95

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

Christmas Special



£8,000 OF COMPETITION PRIZES!!

Win Books,
Diaries, Modems,
Games, Colour Telly, Microdrives, a Weekend Away, T-Shirts etc . . .

LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOK BACK

POKES EXTRAVAGANZA!

Rob Candy goes bananas

GARGOYLE GAMES

We talk to the men behind the heroes.

HEWSON'S SPHINX

An astonishing new game revealed!

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
GIANT POSTER
8 exciting pages big, printed both sides!
Plus pull out calendar
with surprises!

Christmas 1985 Issue No. 24

Released on
December 12th

Christmas comes but once a year . . . and so do friendly aliens, this time not bearing gifts but taking them back to a planet underprivileged enough not have Spectrums, joysticks and Cub monitors. Perhaps that spacecraft glowing ET-like in the background is more used to descending aggressively in the face of fearsome Earth defence fire. This picture could easily have been mawkish if it weren't for Oliver's knack of adding the uneasy element; the visual gag is the Space Invaders cassette, but it is the alien's dubious expression that makes in tautly funny.

Once again it was a giant special edition, and brought with it the now-familiar problems of a drastically shortened schedule because the issue would be on sale earlier in the month than usual. And the pressure wasn't helped by the flurry of late-for-Christmas games to review.

Seven Smashes was a fair crop. Odin's *Robin Of The Wood* with presentation reminiscent of *Sabre Wulf* scored because of the character interaction. Mastertronic's sequel to *Finders Keepers*, *Spellbound*, found favour, as did the finished version of Durell's *Saboteur*, which hadn't looked quite as promising when seen at The PCW Show.

A new name, Insight, hit the mark with a shoot-'em-up called *Vectron*, whose ultrafast 3-D graphics impressed everyone. Derek pronounced *Swords And Sorcery* to be a Smash, justifying the 18 months that had gone into it. And Elite received two Smashes, one for an unusually playable platform game, *Roller Coaster*, and the other for the long-awaited Capcom *Commando* conversion.

Commando, already released on the 64, had been disappointing, but its Spectrum counterpart was much better. In reverse, however, System 3's *International Karate*, a big 64 hit, missed the mark on the Spectrum and only got 68%.

In the year since the last Christmas Special, Newsfield's offices in King Street had altered dramatically. What a year earlier had been spacious and underoccupied was now cramped – a situation that was to get worse still, and one we've had to live with since. The editorial floor, which had been home to Roger Kean, Matthew Uffindell, myself on a few days and two part-timers after school hours, now had to support eight full-time staff, five part-timers and the increasingly complex photographic setup.

The middle floor was worse still, with nine staff whose tasks included mail order, subscriptions, advertisement administration, reception, accounts and mail order/subscription storage and packing.

With subscriptions running at several thousand per magazine, it was becoming obvious that King Street could no longer hold all the subscription copies, even for the few days it took to send them out. A solution would not be found till 1986, but in the meantime the entire company, including the five art-department staff, formed chain gangs once a week to transport magazine bundles from the street up the stairs to a room on the middle floor. The lorries delivering our subscription copies were frequently the juggernauts Pete Cooke had so vividly described in his CRL game, definitely not suited to Ludlow's quaintly narrow streets. Newsfield unloading sessions became a fraught business, a battle against time and the inevitable intervention of the traffic warden.

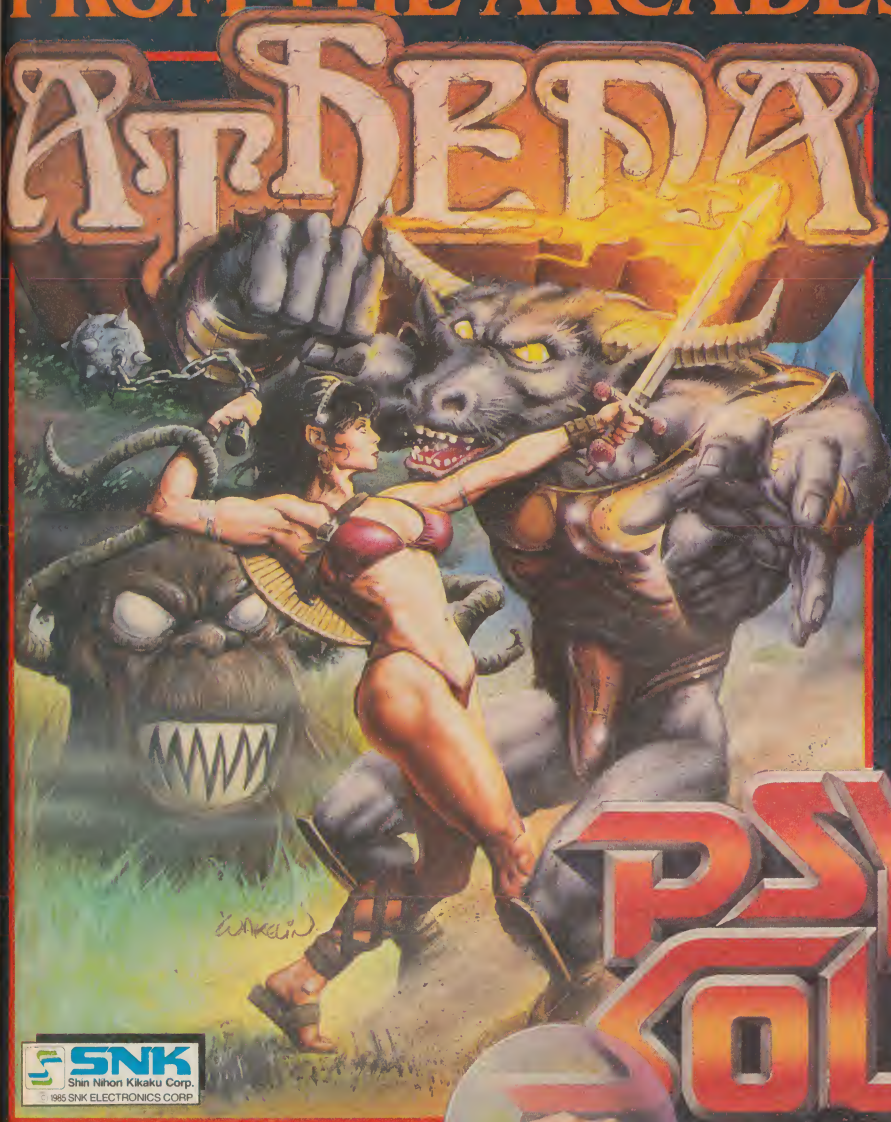
Eventually a real fight did ensue with Ludlow's solitary traffic warden, a moment of sublime looniness when the large ex-policeman warden, driven mad by our constant blockages, pinned Oliver Frey to Victoria Wine's wall and threatened assault before several bemused Newsfield witnesses. Ludlow now has two traffic wardens – is this progress or retaliation?

As soon as the Christmas issues had gone to press, February's had to be considered, for ZZAP! at least had to be at the printer before the Christmas break. It was a weary team that gathered at the Bull Hotel for the Newsfield Christmas Dinner a few days before the holiday, but no-one could fail to be pleased. CRASH's circulation figures were among the highest ever achieved for a computer title in Britain, ZZAP! was doing splendidly and hopes for AMTIX! were running high. It seemed a good way to go into the New Year.



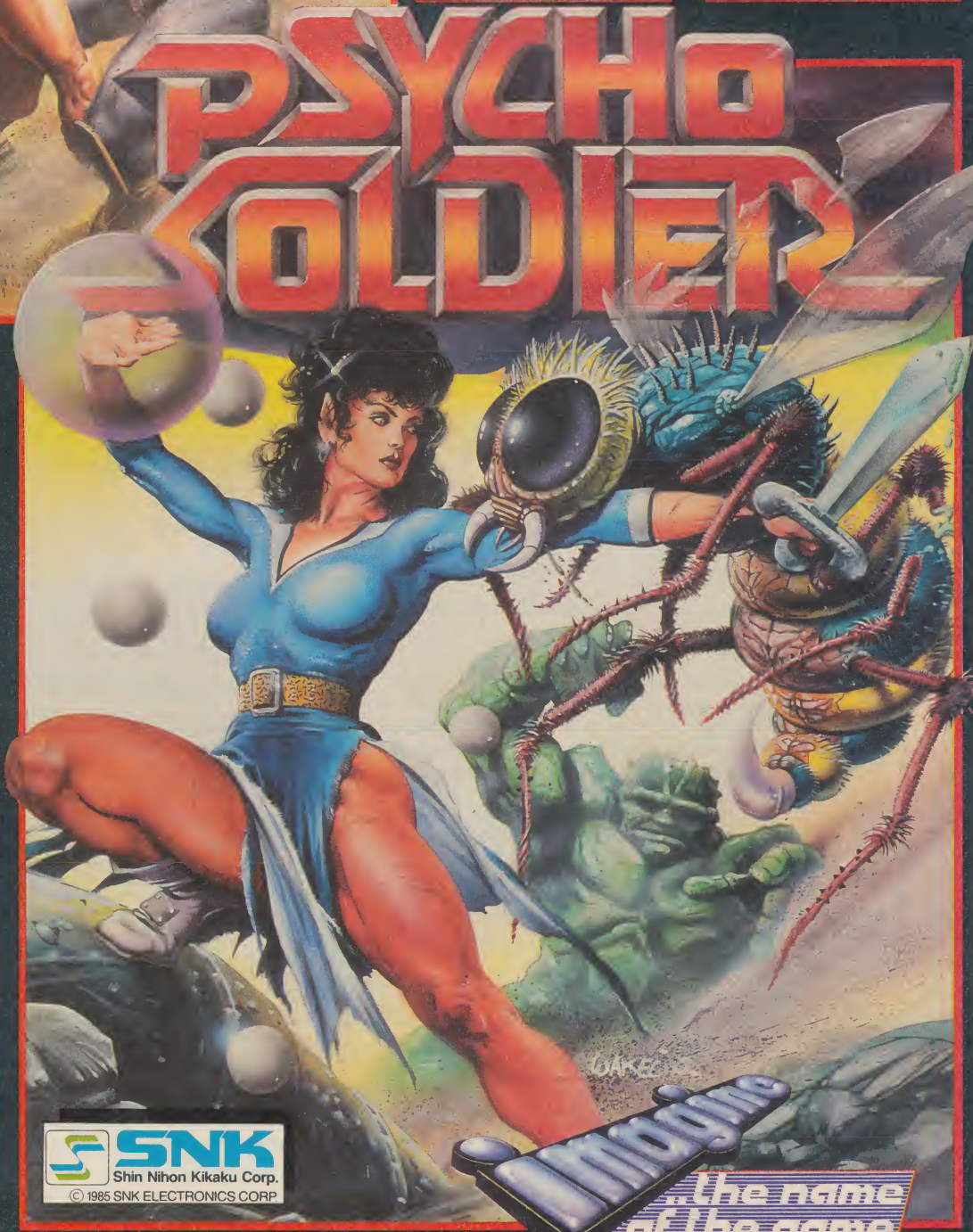
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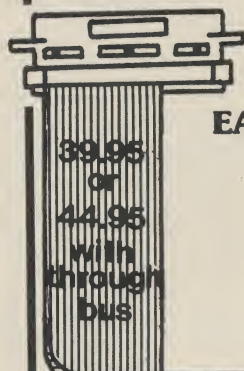
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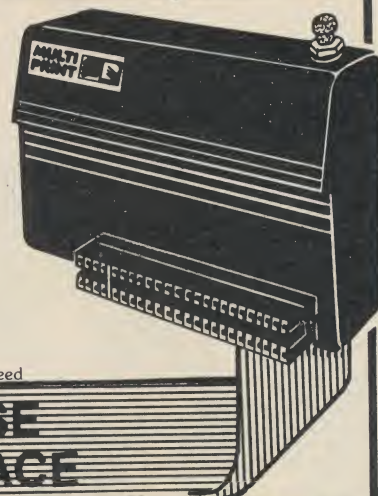
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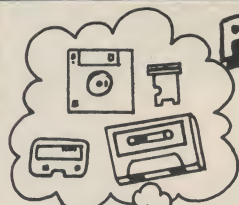
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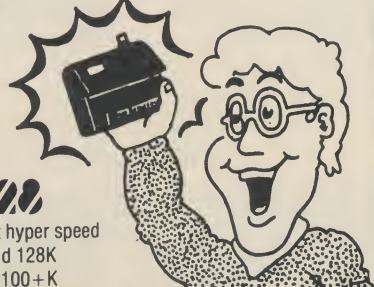
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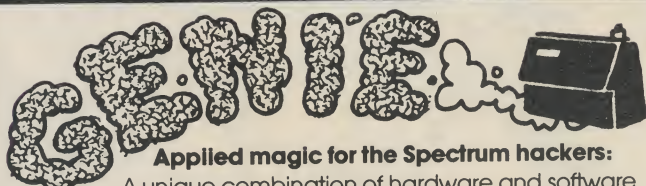
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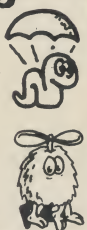
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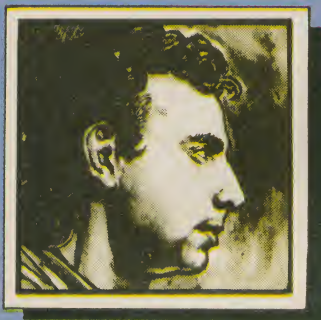
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TECH NICHE



JON BATES on insufferable noise, matricide and two Ram Music Machine utilities

WELCOME to the zoo. Things have been fairly hectic here at the Bates Motel and what with letters to answer and programs to review, I've really been pushed to find time to stab people in showers and push cars into swamps and as to buying all those old ladies clothes... there simply aren't enough jumble sales to go round.

But seriously... As promised last month, here are two overviews of programs designed to run on the Ram/Flare Music Machine and brought to my attention by RAMMI, the users' club. Both concentrate on developing utilities that form part of the original package and they're both really useful additions to the original.

First on the stocks is the *Sample Editor* from Quasar Software. It comes in two configurations on the same tape, for the 48 and the + Spectrums, and the basic idea is that it can look at samples you've made using the Music Machine in greater detail and do a lot more to them than the Ram product alone can.

When you've put samples through the treatment they can be reloaded back into your sample files for instant use - well, nearly. The honest introduction to the manual does tell you the shortcomings of sampling on the Spectrum and acknowledges that by necessity any sampling on it is a sort of compromise.

On loading up there are no voices present, so this means digging out your sampler files. It would have been nicer and more immediate for the first-time user to have some samples to play with, but never mind.

Once a sample is loaded, several options give you access to

RAM PAGE

peripherals of the sample. Any alterations at any stage can either be displayed as a waveform or played from a screen keyboard display. 'Equalize' has a representation of a graphic equalizer and you can emphasise or de-emphasise particular harmonics over a very wide selection of 28 narrow harmonic bands, thus pruning odd harmonies and inharmonic frequencies.

Overall volume and pitch can be altered; changing the latter is important if you've sampled at a weird pitch which renders that sample useless to anyone but a dab hand at transposing.

But the real smartie part is the waveform display and 'manual alteration' which spreads the sample waveform over several pages. Microscopic sections of the sample can be chopped out, inserted, and the join made smooth by carefully checking the values at the new splice. At each juncture the part or whole of the sample can be played so that you can aurally check your handiwork.

And at any stage in any of *Sample Editor*'s functions you can restore the original sample if you go wrong; whatever you do, you have a backup. *Sample Editor* is well worth the £9.99 that will bring it to you from: Quasar Software, 83 Clerkenwell Road., London EC1 tel (01) 987 3908. They threaten us with more goodies in the near future. (By the way,

Quasar lads, my name is NOT Tony.)

MAKING TRACKS

The second program is an eight-track MIDI recorder and player, *Ram Tracks*. This is a comprehensive recorder with all the usual facilities. Recording is done on the selected MIDI channel in either mono or poly mode and in real time. The number of bars to be entered is preset by the user and there is a click metronome that comes either from the headphones or line-out socket.

Each little section recorded forms a pattern which is filed away. It can later be assembled with the other patterns into a song - very much in the manner of the *Spectrum*. For each pattern the notes are displayed and scrolled graphically and the pitch shown on a screen piano keyboard.

Notes can be edited, removed or entered via the MIDI keyboard in this fashion. A pattern recorded on any channel can be swapped to any other channel and it magically and visually jumps from track to track. Patterns can be copied so that similar patterns can run concurrently.

Ram Tracks will also recognize incoming MIDI channel information and put the notes into the correct channel/track automatically, which is quite

useful if you're recording on several separate channels simultaneously.

At this point I have to confess that either my version of the program or my Music Machine went a bit bananas and started putting out a one-volt metronome pulse into the MIDI Out cable. The result of this was that my new superwhizzo multikeyboard went into immediate hibernation and remained comatose till the voltage was removed from its port. Investigation of the program was rather abruptly curtailed. (I seem to remember that Mr Goodwin did borrow the hardware from me at some point, but I'm sure that's merely coincidental!)

Suffice to say that *Ram Tracks* seems a pretty good utility, and if you have the hardware it'll save you having to purchase another interface and program and spending a lot more cash than you need to. A couple of minus points: it doesn't record note velocity or patch changes, it only works in 48K mode and I've never liked the idea of replay speeds notated in anything other than beats per minute. Why set another standard when there's a universal one already?

A more expensive update of *Ram Tracks* is round the corner, but you could dive in now and send £14.99 to J.B. Computing, Box Bush Farm, Summer Lane, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS24 7TF.

► *Ram Tracks* from J.B. Computing records Machine music for MIDI use



CORRECTIONS - TECTRICS COMPUCHORD

Last month's CRASH misspelt the names of Tectrics and its chord computer program *Compuchord* (those spellings are correct), and also made an error in Tectrics's postcode. The company's address is 17 Whittington Road, Tilgate, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 5AN.

Tectrics has asked us to point out that at the moment *Compuchord* is only available as a keyboard tutor with sound, and the upgrade with guitar-chord display and MIDI compatibility via any interface will not be out till after Christmas.



SIMON N GOODWIN
nips round the back of his 128K Spectrums for a voyage into the unknown socket – and discovers further faces of Romantic Robot's Multiface 3

ANY PORT IN A SOCKET

THERE'S a spare interface socket fitted to every 128K Spectrum, as readers keep reminding me. Tech Tips in CRASH Issue 41 explained that Sinclair is very secretive about the keypad socket labelled 'AUX' on the new +3, but since then I've had some success in finding out about this interface and controlling it from 128 BASIC. This is the story so far...

When the 128 first appeared – in Spain at the end of 1985 – a small box, rather like a calculator with no display, was connected to the keypad socket by a curly lead. The box worked as a numeric pad and provided extra functions in the BASIC editor. You can get the same effects with combinations of keys on the main keyboard, as noted in Issue 33 Tech Tips.

The 128 arrived in Britain in February 1986, but the keypad apparently didn't come with it; all the keypads I've seen have been labelled in Spanish. That leaves most 128-users with a spare telephone socket at the edge of their machine and no information on how to use it.

There are a few hints in the back of the +3 manual, which says 'the AUX socket supports two input lines and two output lines, connected to the AY-3-8912. Using software control loops the I/O lines could be driven as a second RS-232 port. Alternatively, they could be used to drive a robot or some external device.'

This sounded interesting, albeit easier said than done, so I plugged a six-way telephone plug into the long-suffering 128 that I share with fellow Techie Jon Bates and tried a few experiments.

KEY NOTES

The AY-3-8912 is the 128's sound chip. I explained its inner workings in Issue 32 Tech Tips but didn't say much about the 8-bit port built in.

The four most significant bits of this port (values 16, 32, 64 and 128) are used for input, and the other four for output; two of each are allocated to the keypad and two of each to the RS-232/MIDI socket.

Reading from left to right as you look into the keypad socket, with the notch on the left, the first connection carries a +12-volt supply. The next is connected to input bit 5. Then come output bit 1, input bit 4 and output bit 0. The last connection is a signal earth (0 volts).

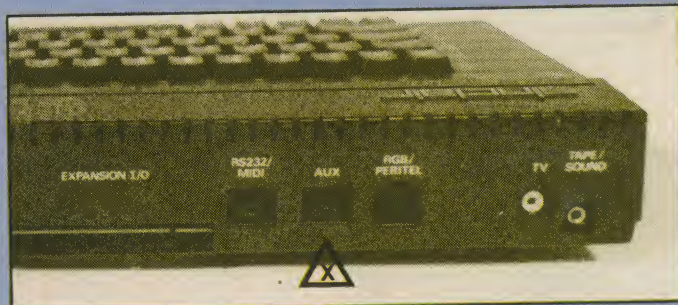
These signals are adequate for most serial interfaces but not enough to connect a joystick, which needs five inputs. The Sinclair keypad contained electricry to distinguish 15 different keys, but it couldn't tell you if more than one key was pressed.

You must switch the port between input and output as required, by changing the value of bit 6 in register 7. The lower six bits are used to control the sound channels. It's best to set them to 1 unless you want unplanned beeps and fizzes to accompany your experiments. The top bit, bit 7, is only used by the chip's big brother, the AY-3-8910, which sports two 8-bit ports rather than one.

You use OUT 65533 to select a particular register (storage cell) in the sound chip. After that you can read and write that register's value with IN 49149 and OUT 49149.

Use OUT 65533, 7 to select register 7 in the sound chip, and OUT 49149, 127 to set up the port for output. In theory OUT 49149, 63 should allow input from the port, but I have not yet got this to work.

In any case, extra outputs are more useful than inputs on the Amstrad versions of the 128, because they already have ten switch inputs – the joystick sockets, which you can read with IN 61438 and IN 63486.



► Behind the scenes: X marks the secret socket on the back of all 128K Spectrums

DATA OUTPUT

Once you've set up the port you can output data through the keypad socket by writing to register 14. Don't take much current from the socket, or short out the signals. It's OK to connect a light-emitting diode, with a 2.2K resistor to limit the current, but you shouldn't try to run a bulb or an electric motor directly from these outputs.

OUT 65533, 14 followed by OUT 49149, 2 sends the voltage on

the third pin of the keypad socket diving from +12 volts to -11. OUT 49152, 0 switches the signal back to +12 volts till you set bit 1 again.

The other output pin, the second from last, can be set to a negative voltage by writing an odd number to register 14. It's only useful for short pulses because the system keeps resetting it to +12 volts.

I hope this information helps some of you put the keypad socket to use – and I'd be interested to hear from anyone who finds out more.

MUSIC MECHANIC

AL STRAKER of RAMMI!, the club for users of the Ram Music Machine, has revealed a couple of POKEs that convert sample files saved by the machine into standard CODE format so you can load them into ZX BASIC for analysis and alteration. (Music Machine files normally use file-type 4, which is not compatible with BASIC LOAD and SAVE commands.)

Leave the Music Machine program by entering 'I' from the main menu, and type POKE 39352, 3 to make the software use file-type 3 for samples. Type RAND USR 27000 to restart the program. Now

sample files can be read into ZX BASIC with LOAD "" CODE. (The format of sample files was explained in Issue 42 Tech Tips.)

POKE 39888, 3 lets the Music Machine load CODE files. You can POKE 39888 back to 4 temporarily when you want to load files generated by the original version of the program.

Al Straker has previously contributed advice about mains interference and other Music Machine POKEs, so it's high time he won our Tipster prize. £30 worth of software will be yours, Al, as soon as you let CRASH Mail Order know what you want.

► The Ram Music Machine: now you can analyse files in BASIC



MULTIFACETS

THE PROTOTYPE version of Romantic Robot's Multiface3 had no through port for other peripherals. This was particularly annoying because, unlike earlier Multifaces, it lacked a Kempston joystick port. Most new programs work with the peculiar ports on the Amstrad Spectrums, and you can plug a normal joystick into them via an adapter, but many old titles only work with the Kempston standard.

This problem has been cured, at a price – the Multiface3 is now available in two versions. The

standard model costs £44.95. If you want to plug other peripherals in the back you'll have to pay an extra fiver for a through port.

The Multiface3 lets you use the +3 disk drive from 48K BASIC, which is not otherwise possible. You must select this BASIC with the SPECTRUM command from 128 BASIC, rather than using the 48K BASIC option on the main menu, which sets a lock that prevents access to the disk ROM.

The Multiface screen-printout routines are the same as the Multiprint large and shaded COPY

formats, which I reviewed in the August CRASH. They use the machine's built-in Centronics port.

The compressed file format is usually an advantage, because it makes loading faster and saves disk space. However, it can be a snag if you want to modify or disassemble a program file. With this in mind, the Multiface3 lets you switch off the compression and save files as exact copies of the contents of memory.

TRICKS AND TRAPS

Romantic Robot produced the Multiface3 impressively quickly, and solved some interesting problems en route, but it's unlikely that the Multiface3 will be the last word in Spectrum cassette-to-disk transfer devices.

Similar gadgets for earlier versions of the Spectrum use an edge-connector signal called ROMCS to turn off the computer's internal ROM and replace it with their own code. In this way they take over the system by redirecting processing to their own code when a button on the gadget is pressed.

But Amstrad has stopped these devices working on the +3 by disconnecting the ROMCS signal!

The Multiface3 gets around this by using two signals associated with the +3's four ROMs: ROM1-OE and ROM2-OE. This way it can take control of any program intended for earlier Spectrums that runs on the +3. It's important to note that the Multiface3 won't work with a 48K machine and could even damage an old computer.

PROBLEMS WITH +3 SOFTWARE?

The Multiface3 may not work with new programs for the +3. That's

because the new Spectrum supports memory configurations intended for the CP/M disk option, and some of these entirely replace the system ROM with RAM, leaving no ROM for the Multiface to disable!

The Multiface normally runs in the 'shadow' of the ROM. If you press the magic button when RAM is in the relevant space, the Multiface3 waits for the ROM to appear so that it can leap in.

But no Spectrum lets an interface disable RAM... so the Multiface will never be able to interrupt games written specifically for the +3 and using the new memory configurations. As far as we're aware nobody has yet released such a program, but no doubt it'll happen soon.

This puts software houses in an interesting position. It means the +3 is the only Spectrum which can run programs that cannot be copied by a magic-button device.

NEW AGE HARDWARE

A Multiface has its antisocial side – it's a powerful tool for a pirate.

Unfortunately, I doubt the +3's unique feature will bring an end to software piracy and a corresponding flood of commercial programs specifically for the +3.

It's possible to make a superMultiface with its own processor, which could take over the system completely whatever the memory arrangement. Such a device would require a lot of new design work, and would be inherently more expensive than the Multiface3.

And determined hackers, and those who sell products intended specifically for software theft, will probably prefer to learn how to copy protected disks...



► A pawn in the pirate war: Romantic Robot's Multiface3 offers cassette-to-disk transfer, but it could be thwarted by +3 programs

TAPE TWEAKS

SEVERAL READERS have written in to say that Spectrum +2 loading problems can be cured by adjusting the position of the tape-recorder head. I've dithered awhile about printing this tip, because it's easy to make things worse if you adjust the head carelessly. But I've decided to spill the beans, because it seems a large proportion of the +2 sold recently were not correctly aligned.

The cassette recorder in the +2 is the only mechanical part, and is therefore likely to be the most troublesome. If the head is incorrectly aligned it will tend to misread commercial tapes but the computer will probably still load things it saved without trouble – the misalignment cancels out if you load and save with the same machine, though even then there's some loss of quality.

Check the alignment of your cassette unit by playing a well-recorded cassette – a professionally-duplicated music tape, say – through the computer and listening to the sound through the TV. The sound should be bright and clear; there may be a bit of TV noise or interference in the background, but don't worry about that now (I hope to print the cure for that problem next month!)

If the tape sounds very full and bassy it's likely that the head in the recorder needs to be repositioned. Before you do this, check that the tape is correctly positioned in the

drive and that the door is properly closed, or you'll have no hope of good results!

There's a small hole in the top of the +2 box, between the cassette door and the control buttons. Press the eject button to open the door, and look into the hole. At the bottom is a screw which sets the angle at which the head passes over the tape. It's when this angle is wrong that the problems start.

Turn the screw clockwise to raise the tape head or anticlockwise to lower it. Don't use a magnetic screwdriver, and if possible use a plastic key rather than a metal screwdriver, as extra metal near the tape head confuses the circuitry. Be careful not to turn the screw far, or it could come undone completely; if one direction doesn't help, or makes things worse, try the other way.

You should find a fairly narrow band where the sound is clear. If you're careful you can use a blob of nail varnish (NOT Superglue!) to hold the screw in place so the alignment won't have to be reset every time you use the machine.

CRASH reader **S G Phelan** sells a kit that includes further instructions on adjusting the +2's tape head, and a knob-and-shaft assembly that fits into the top of the machine, making it easy to adjust the alignment at any time. The kit costs £11.00 from S G Phelan, 47 Doodhorse O.P.E., Kingston Upon Hull HU6 9HA.

RODENT CONTROL

PAUL COTTON has written in bemoaning the lack of programs supporting the Kempston mouse system. He wonders if he can extract the mouse-control routines from Softek's *Artist II* and use them in his own programs. He also wants a version of Rainbird's *Art Studio* that works with the Kempston mouse.

I wouldn't recommend extracting the *Artist II* mouse routines, though I'd be interested to hear from anyone who has done it!

The original version of *The Art Studio* only worked with the AMX Mouse, and Kempston sold a special version with its mouse. Together they cost £69.95.

Kempston has now cut the mouse's price to £49.95, and no longer sells the special version of *Art Studio* either with its mouse or

separately. However, the *Extended Art Studio* upgrade DOES work with the Kempston mouse, and that's available for £12.00 direct from Rainbird (01) 240 8838).

When it comes to using the mouse in your own programs, there are two options apart from hacking code out of an existing package. The £9.95 *Kempston Toolkit* includes simple facilities to add support for windows, icons and pointers to existing programs.

The £14.95 *Spectrum Graphics Kit* is more expensive but also more flexible, including an extended BASIC with new mouse commands. Both those programs are published by Kempston Data ((0908) 690018), and come bundled with the new £49.95 mouse package, at no extra charge.

LIVER BOARDS

Everything you wanted to know about improving your VTX but didn't know who to ask – a guide for the man on the 8-bit address bus with **PAUL EVANS**

IT'S ALL very nice in Ludlow but I'm in the land of docks, two cathedrals and *Bread*. And Liverpool was never famous for weather. As for Halewood (a totally unheard-of village in the 'Pool), it's worse and life is getting right up my nose! Anyway, on with the show – this month I'm looking at how to improve your VTX hardware. Soon you can be laughing at the Beeb owners who supposedly have the best comms software and once laughed at you!

The technical side of the VTX is very simple. (But please note: game freaks who cringe at things like '8-bit address bus' and 'Centronics interfacing leads' should run off screaming for a game of *Exolon* now.) The VTX is just an RS232 interface and a 1200/75 (V23) modem. Easy!

Well.. the RS232 is a very weird version of the actual standard (if there is one!) and as far as I know nobody has managed to connect another modem to it.

The RS232 board has an EPROM fitted which contains the software normally seen on power-up. Basically, this software only has what's needed for logging on. Now a brilliant programmer by the name of David Gorski (aka DeeGee) has turned into a god for Speccy 'netters. He wrote a package which every VTX-owner should have: *VTX Editor*, with features sometimes believed impossible on a Speccy.

COLOUR, GRAPHICS, TELEPHONIST

The most important extra is an ESC key. ESC commands allow the use of colour and graphics when typing, say, a mailbox to someone. It's all done in very neat menus that lead to even more very neat menus which can take you back to some other very neat menu you didn't want to know about. And *VTX Editor* includes valuable timesaving features – for instance, you can save frames to read later if you're panicking about your phone bill.



► Ripe for redevelopment: a humble VTX awaits software

If you get LOADS of mailboxes you can answer them by preparing them on *VTX Editor*. (True, this function is available on the VTX's built-in software, but *VTX Editor* is laid out like a proper Prestel screen.) This is known as offline editing and is invaluable to people (like myself) who run sections on Prestel, because the frames can be created and then transmitted at high speed, saving pounds in phone bills on the DUKE Prestel computer.

A new feature for VTXs is available for the first time on *VTX Editor*: access to scrolling boards. Boards running at 1200/75 can be accessed and parity, bits etc can all be set. There's also a facility which scans a frame, takes any mailbox numbers off the screen and stores them on microdrive. You can then set up a mailbox and send it to all the numbers stored automatically. It's known as a junkmailer. Up to 26 frames can be stored in memory and saved to tape or microdrive.

Printer options are available, and programmer Gorski doesn't mind anyone customizing the software for their interface. In fact, the instructions tell you how to alter the software to hold your passwords for automatic sending and phone-number lists!

Other programmers have produced upgrades which enable you to automatically receive MBXs and disable the SYMBOL SHIFT key so SYMBOL SHIFT B produces *.

VTX Editor is only £4 and available on Micronet as telesoftware – any VTX-owner missing this must be off his rocker.

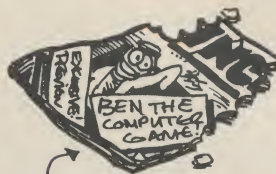
THE EDITOR ON ROM

VTX Editor is very efficient if used on microdrive, but loading it off the tape time and time again can be a bit of a drag. Spectre Comms has produced a version of the software on two 8K ROMs which can be easily installed inside the VTX. The *VTX Editor* software then comes on instantly on power-up.

This version of the editor has all the features mentioned above, and is available from Spectre Comms at £22.95 (including VAT).

KING GRUB!

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NOT VERY GOOD RIVAL SPECTRUM MAGAZINE! (YEUKK!)



IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING I ATE! BURP!

